

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note that the old [LTTeditor@aol.com](mailto:LTTeditor@aol.com) address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## The Passing of the Years... and welcome to a new one!

In celebration of the start of 2009, herewith another sequence of date-ordered communion tokens similar to that with which we celebrated the end of 2006 and the start of 2007 {LTT\_21,22}. Not quite as crude on average as English detectorists are used to seeing, but not without a certain rusticity in some cases, and worth studying for a comparison of styles.



- 1678. Brechin, Angus
- 1700. Mertoun, Berwick
- 1706. Crich, Fife
- 1712. Dyke, Morayshire
- 1713. Queensferry, W.Loathian
- 1716. Ladykirk, Berwickshire
- 1718. Morton, Dumfries
- 1720. Balquhidder, Perthshire
- 1728. Westruther, Berwickshire
- 1729. Falstone, Northumberland
- 1734. Leuchars, Fife
- 1744. Riccarton, Ayrshire
- 1745. Kirkden, Angus
- 1747. Weem, Perthshire
- 1748. Carmichael, Lanarkshire
- 1753. St.Andrews, Fife
- 1765. Kemback, Fife



- 1766. Ferry {Tayport}, Fife
- 1768. Hawick, Roxburgh
- 1774. Forgan, Fife
- 1776. Girvan, Ayrshire
- 1778. Balquhidder, Perthshire {again}
- 1779. Tarbolton, Ayr
- 1782. Dundee, Angus
- 1785. Dundee, Angus {again}
- 1786. Urquhart & Logie Wester.



- Ross & Cromarty
- 1787. Peterculter, Aberdeen
- 1787. Logie Easter, Ross & Cromarty
- 1792. Edderton, Ross & Cromarty
- 1800. Tannadice, Angus
- 1806. Lismore & Appin, Argyll
- 1806. Contin, Ross & Cromarty
- 1812. Lauder, Berwickshire



*Happy New Year!*

## Picture Gallery



First up this month are a nice group of pieces {Figs.1-5}, all except one similarly patinated, from near Lakenheath in Suffolk. No extraordinary subject matter on the four brownish pieces, just some unusual and attractive rendering. Fig.1 shows a cartwheel with a rim round the outside and two other full circles within; added to which there are two objects each with pellet ends, like a couple of dumb-bells, running round part of the inner circle to make that part of the design thicker than on the adjacent untouched arc. The reverse is a ladder or stretcher, enhanced by some zigzag ornamentation.

Fig.2 appropriates to a cartwheel on one side except that one of the four pellet-ended batons appears not to go to the edge like the others. There is a profusion of pellets both on and off the batons, arranged evenly in three circles. On the reverse, a more conventional cross but with irregularly spaced pellets, most but not all of which are joined by equally irregularly-spaced lines; the overall impression given being that of a star constellation, different in each case, in each quarter.

Fig.3 depicts a robust whorl on one side, type 31, and an equally robust type 7 grid on the other. All three of these pieces are in the 25-27 mm range, and it is the strength of their depiction which makes them so attractive; one can but admire the work of the artist, who troubled to make such pieces out of his repertoire of simple ideas. A slightly smaller piece from the same group, Fig.4 depicts what might be AL or VL on one side, except that if letters one is the other way up to its neighbour; more over, the left-hand letter does have a definite crossbar. Or does that indicate the level of the wine, in a wineglass? The reverse is scarcely less interesting; the “Chinese-six” version of the cartwheel, in which an odd number of spokes are formed by inscribing a diagonal across and then adding further lines to split the segments 3-2 between halves {as in this example}, or more rarely 4-3.



Fig.5 shows, most unusually, a man smoking; on the reverse, a fairly standard 6-petal with just a hint of ornamentation on the inside of the rim. It looks to be of different colouring from the rest, but other specimens of both this piece and the brown ones have been found in the same area. Whether they were actually from the same site I am not sure. At least four of them, including the smoker, show evidence of overlapping and sometimes slightly misaligned halves; however, there is little sign of the sprue sometimes evident on true “seal” type strikings. Perhaps our careful craftsman was equally meticulous about its removal!



Fig.6, 32 mm and 13.6 gm, shows what I believe is meant to be two quills sticking out of an inkpot; a very pleasingly different piece of subject matter, which I have not seen before. Doubtless the issuer

was a lawyer, clerk, teacher or somesuch. The reverse simply features his initials, RT, retrograde. Finally, Fig.7, an even bigger and heavier piece, 36 mm and 27.2 mm; supposedly a German seal which its previous owner dates to about 1560, although with all the colouring of a typical Thames find. The “A” beneath the crown is obviously the initial of the king, perhaps August{us}; around it an inscription something like “Holstein Eshe Drat”, which I have not yet researched, and concerning which I am willing for anyone to enlighten me. On the reverse a typical merchant’s monogram, letters PDAV being visible.

## *Houselling Tokens*

Never heard of the things? Neither had I, until a short while ago. There are so few published contemporary references to lead tokens that it was a pleasure to find, on the British History Online website, a set of London Churchwardens' Accounts dated 1525-1603, for St.Martin's in the Fields to be precise, which mentioned them profusely over the course of nearly 70 years.

The centre of London is now taken to be Charing Cross, from which St.Martin's is but a stone's throw; however, in the 16th century it would have been very much at the west end of town, possibly even in parts a touch rural. Its churchwardens normally served in pairs for two years at a time, commencing at Christmas until 1553 and Lady Day {25 March, then New Year's Day} thereafter. Their accounting methods were somewhat various and their spelling even more so, as seen in their renderings of the various token entries shown in the appendix on pages 5-6.

The first reference to tokens appears in 1534, after which they appear in most years to 1555 and invariably thereafter; possibly they were used in some of the missing years as well, and are hidden behind or combined with other entries.

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The dictionary definition is clear: houselling is "pertaining to the Eucharist". So, were they Communion tokens? No, it is not that simple; for a start, the earliest pre-date by some years the Calvinistic edict which stimulated the Scottish CT series. The editor of the St.Martin's accounts, J.V.Kitto, writing in 1901, volunteers: "Token money was probably the payment made by people (by way of Easter offering), when they received their token, that they were prepared—by confession—to make their Easter Communion". I'm still not too sure from that whether the payment was fulfilment of some obligation, e.g. a local tax, or a charitable donation, or whether Communion was a service for which people were being charged. If the clerics had got the congregation so under their thumb that that they believed communion to be a necessity, then it was certainly a good way of screwing them for whatever reason.

Against the year 1575 Kitto records, "The Token money, a survival of Pre-Reformation usage, was quite distinct from the Easter Collections or other receipts from Communions. From this year the Communion collections are recorded in the Rate Books"; which latter, indeed, is mentioned in the 1577 entry.

A further annotation, at the end of the record, notes an edict of 14 Feb 1608: "It is ordered That every Com[m]unicant, for the generall Com[m]unions at Easter, shall the day before Their Receiving, Repaire to the Minister, or Curate, and then and their (sic) pay his dueties and take a token, and Restore his Token, at his Com'ing the next day to the Com[m]union, and to give their names bothe the day before to the Minister, and the day of the Receiving to such as shall attend the same. And that the Churchwardens shall take order where the Pewes be long to have every seacond pewe lefte emptie for the Minister to come the more conveniently." This sheds a little further light on the process, if not the purpose.

It will be noticed that nearly all the token-related entries reference Easter. Whether this was the sole communion of the year, or whether there were others at which tokens were not required because they fell at other parts of the fiscal year, is not certain. It does seem fairly certain, however, that the motive for houselling tokens was financial, whereas that for Scottish CTs was moral.

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So much for the reasons; we need to ascertain which of the various tokens known to us, then current, pertain to this particular activity. Tokens were issued by civil authorities, ecclesiastical authorities and tradesmen. To the latter we may comfortably assign those pieces depicting merchant marks, most initials, tools of trade or their produce; perhaps also some of the anonymous stock tokens. What does that leave?

One possible candidate, although not volunteered with any certainty, is the series of small dated pieces mentioned last month. One variety is known for various dates c.1539-1554 and depicts the date alone on one side and something like a seated or standing figure with a superimposed "M" on the other. I am inclined to think that the figure may be intended to be Christ, and that the "M" is in fact not an initial but



his arms. Such is the level of detail packed into this 13mm piece that, even on quite good specimens such as the one shown {Fig.1}, the obverse is not photogenic.

The other variety, known for various dates in the 1570s and 1580s, is larger {15mm} and lighter.



The 1579 specimen shown {Fig.2} has initials TC, which may be presumed to relate to a merchant, but could they be “Token {for} Communion”? All dated 16th cent lead is rare, and yet here we have two types which are known to exist over quite a number of years; which poses the further questions, if indeed these are houselling pieces, whether each church had their own series or shared a common one, and whether the practice was peculiar to London. Further, despite the usage being annual, would a date really be required, to the point of the church needing to go to the trouble and expense of a new issue each year?

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To the records now, and some of their interesting idiosyncrasies. Many of the houselling records appear under “Our Lady Quarter”, i.e. 25 May to 23 June; others are not so divided. In 1543, when Easter fell on 25 Mar, ““Our Lady Day Quarter” is explicitly stated. In the only two years {1573, 1600} when Easter was early enough to fall in the Christmas Quarter, 25 Dec to 24 Mar, the data is not so arranged. Unfortunately the date is left blank on the 1573 entry; somebody obviously made it in advance and never completed it. Such laxity was not uncommon; dates when given for the houselling money are often late-April, and occasionally well into May. The earliest date stated for such an entry is 31 Mar, and indeed that for 1571 must be wrong, since that year Easter was in April.; either that, or they made an advance collection, which appears unlikely. Presumably the churchwardens for 1569-71 had made an entry at the beginning of April in 1570 {when Easter was early} and copied it in advance during their second year to remind themselves.

In one year, 1556, they made no entry at all and held the money over unrecorded until 1557. In 1560 they failed to collect it all in one go for some reason, and had to make an extra entry later. From 1560 onwards, also, we get frequent references to “halfe of the token money”; not every year, but most, enough to imply that it was the norm even when not explicitly mentioned. Where the other half went, without being mentioned in the accounts whatsoever, is interesting.

There is also never any reference to expense for the manufacture of tokens, which is again surprising; mention of expenditure on the practicalities of the houselling system is confined to two purses to put the tokens and money in {1572}, presumably one for each, and a hint of a new book bought for accounting purposes {1577}.

The average sum received in houselling dues creeps slowly upwards over the period, although this may simply reflect the growing population of the parish; only in three years, two of them consecutive, is the sum exactly the same as the previous year. 1566-68 look suspicious; could a major London parish really produce an income, identical to the penny, for three years on the trot? There is a marked jump in the early 1540s, also, after which four years refer to “pascall and token money”; how these differ is uncertain, but it may be that the two were thereafter combined, thus causing such an effect.

1525-1603 is but a snapshot in the life of St.Martin’s, and it would be good to know how long houselling tokens were used thereafter. It will be noted that the term itself is not used after 1559. I would welcome any ideas, either on this or as to what lead series the houselling system employed.

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*St. Martins in the Fields Churchwardens' Accounts:  
References to Howselling Tokens, 1534-1603 {continued}*

	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1534. Item Receued and gathered for the howssellyng tokons in the Churche xiijs vijd	13	7
1535. Item Receued and gathered in the Churche for howselyng tokons S'm xijs ixd	12	9
1536. {No mention}		
1537. {No mention}		
1538. {No mention}		
1539. {No mention}		
1540. Item receued on Ester day in the Churche for howselyng tokons xvjs ijd	16	2
1541. Item receued and gathered on Ester daye in the churche for hoslyng tokons xs	10	0
1542. It'm receyvyd on Ester day for howseling tokyns xxxjs	31	0
1543. In primis receyued on Esterday for houslyng tokens xlijs iijd ob'	42	3
1544. In primis Receued and gathered of the Paryshyon's ffor the pascall and tokyn mony at Easter in the churche xljs vjd	41	6
1545. In primis Receued and gathered of ye paryshyoners for the pascall and token mony at easter in the churche xxxiijs vjd	33	6
1546. In primis Receued and gathered of the p'ysshyoners for the Pascall and tokyn monye at Easter in the Churche xxxvs vd	35	5
1547. In primis Receued and gathered of the p'ysshioners for the Pascall and tokyn monye at Easter in the Churche xxxvjs viijd	36	8
1548. Imprimis receyued of the p'yssheners ffor the token money in the Churche xxxs	30	0
1549. It'm receyued for the token money of the p'issheners xviijs	18	0
1550. {No mention}		
1551. {No mention}		
1552. {No mention}		
1553. It'm Receued of the p'ysshion's for token monye at Easter this Last yere of our accompte xxxixs	39	0
1554. {No mention}		
1555. Item gathered more at the easter of the laste year of the two years Off this or Accompte in tokyn money xxvs	25	0
1556. {Included in 1557 figures}		
1557. Item gathered more in theas two yearis of this or Accompte at Easter in token money iijli viijs vjd ob'	68	6
1558. It' R' and gathered for the howselenge tokens in the Churche At Easter this ffyrst yeare xxxixs jd ob'	39	1
1559. It' R' in or lady quarter in the Churche at Easter for howselenge tokens xxxvs vjd	35	6
1560. It'm Rec' the xviiijth of aprell for the halfe of the token money at Ester xxxviijs vjd do. It'm Rec' the xvjth day of maye more the halfe of the Token money xxiijd	38	6
1561. It'm R' the same day {25 Apr} for thone halfe of the token monye this yere xljs iiijd ob'	41	4
1562. It'm Rec' the xxxjth of marche for the halfe of the token monye at ester xlvs ijd q'	46	2
1563. Item Rec' the xvijth of aprell for the halfe of ye token monye at est' xlvijs vd ob'	48	5
1564. It'm Receyued the ixth of Aprill 1564 for the halfe of the token monneye at Easter xxvjs viijd	26	8
1565. It'm Receyued the xxviiijth daie of Aprill 1565 for the halfe of the token monneye at Easter xxxviijs vjd	38	6

*{continued overleaf}*

{continued from previous page}

	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1566. It'm receyved and gathered the xxvth of Apryll 1566 for half of ye token money at Ester xxviijs viijd	28	8
1567. It'm Rec' and gathered the 25 of Apryll 1567 for half of the token money at Easter xxviijs viijd	28	8
1568. It'm receyued and gathered the xxvth of Aprill 1568 for halffe of ye token moneye at Easter xxviijs viijd	28	8
1569. It'm Receyvede and gathered the xxt of Aprell 1569 for the halfe of the token mon-eye at Easter xxvjs iiijd	26	4
1570. It'm the fyrste of Aprell Receyuede for token moneye xxxiiijs	34	0
1571. It'm Receyuede the laste of Marche for the halfe of the token moneye xxxiijs	33	0
1572. It'm receyved and gathered the . . . . day of . . . . (fn. 10) Anno 1572 for the half of the token monye at Easter xxxixs xd	39	10
do. It'm pd for ij purses to put in com'nion monye and tokens iiijd		4
1573. It'm receyved the [blank] daie of [blank] Anno 1573 for the half of the token Mon-eye at Easter in or seconde yere xls ijd	40	2
1574. Reaceuid the half of the Token money (fn. 3) for the ffirste yeare xxxs	30	0
1575. Reaceuid for Token money in this or Second yeare the some of xxixs vjd	29	6
1576. It'm Rec' more for half of the Token money xlijs xjd ob'	42	11
1577. It'm Rec' for half of the token mony this yeare as appeareth by a perticuler booke thereof made xlvs iijd	45	3
1578. It'm Rec' more for half of the Token mony xlvjs iijd ob' (?)	46	3
1579. Item Rec' more for half of the token money xlvjs iiijd	46	4
1580. Item Receyvid for the Token Money xlixs viijd	49	8
1581. It'm Receyvid for the Token money lijs jd	52	1
1582. It'm Receyvid for Token money xlvijvs vjd ob'	47	6
1583. It'm Receyvid for Token money xlviijs xjd	48	11
1584. It'm Receyvid for Token money lijs	52	0
1585. It'm Receyvid for token money xlviijs	48	0
1586. Receyved for Token money in this or ffirste yeare lvijs. jd.	57	1
1587. It'm Receyved for half the Token money ye some of lvijs. jd.	57	1
1588. It'm receyved for half of ye Token money in this our ffirst yeare xlvijvs iijd	47	3
1589. It'm Receyved for half of ye Token money lijs. iiijd.	52	4
1590. It'm Received for half of ye Token money in this our first yeare liiijvs. iijd.	54	3
1591. It'm Received for half of ye Token money liijs. vd.	53	5
1592. It'm received for half of the Token money in this our first yeare ijli. iiijs.	64	0
1593. It'm Received for half of ye token money ijli. vs.	65	0
1594. It'm received for half of the Token money in this our first year xlixs. vd.	49	5
1595. It'm Received for half of ye Token money lviijs. ijd.	58	2
1596. It'm Received for half the Token money in this or firste yeare ijli. xvjs. iijd.	56	3
1597. It'm Received for half the Token money ijli. ijs. iijd. ob'.	62	3
1598. It'm Receyved for half the Token money in this our firste Yeare ijli. xviijs. iiijd.	58	4
1599. It'm Received for half the Token Money in this or seconde Yeare lviijs. viijd.	58	8
1600. It'm Received for half the Token money in this our firste yeare ijli. jd.	60	1
1601. It'm Received for half the Token money in this or seconde yeare lvijs. iiijd.	57	4
1602. It'm Receyued for halfe the Token monye in this our first yeare lixs. viijd.	59	8
1603. It'm Receiued for half the token money in this or seacnd yeare ijli. iiijs. iiijd.	64	4

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