

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.freemove.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freemove.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note that the old [LTTeditor@aol.com](mailto:LTTeditor@aol.com) address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery

We have had no Baltic bale seals for a long time, but Fig.1, found in Stirlingshire, is a particularly fine example. I understand from the limited information available that the first type {bottom of LTT\_20, page 3} was issued c.1741-49 and that this is the second, c.1748-60, which I haven't seen before. More on that when John Sullivan's book, mentioned in LTT\_21, comes out; unfortunately, he has been having trouble with his publishers. Some letters of the Russian alphabet coincide stylistically with Western letters, but because this specimen contains no Cyrillic script whatsoever the finder thought that, because of its location, it might be a communion token. It isn't; SPB stands for St.Petersburg. The other unusual thing about it is that all the detail is present and that nothing has been lost from the flan. Dimensions are approx 32x27mm, weight is 21.59gm; i.e. it is considerably larger than the later Baltic bale seals.



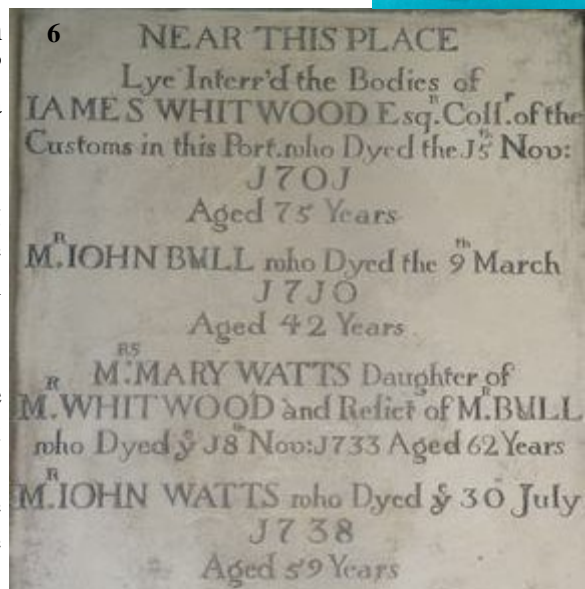
My thanks to John Gough and Damion Cahill for Figs 2 and 4, found in, respectively, Nottinghamshire and Cheshire. These illustrate the potential evolution of designs over the years. The cross and pellets {our type 12} started with the Edwards c.1300, and the pellets when single were occasionally surrounded by annulets {rings}, as per the 15th cent BNJ54 series M discussed last month. In John's Fig.2 we have what looks as if it may be the remnants of rings falling off the edge; arcs, which are half straightening themselves into right-angles, and which appear as very well-defined straight-edged right-angles in other pieces, such as Fig.3; after which a further degeneration sees the right-angles starting to disappear into a mass of radiating lines, well illustrated by Damion's Fig.4, which ultimately are likely to end up as a type 3 cartwheel.



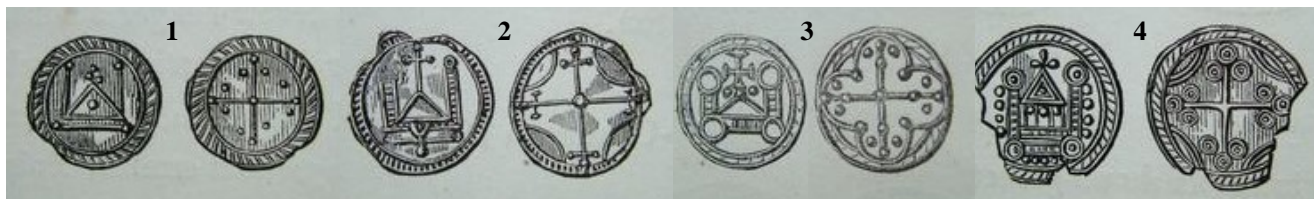
Fig.5, courtesy of Andy Muller, shows an innocuous little piece, one of a number of similarly patinated items with type 1 6-petals on one side and a variety of initials on the other, all found on the same farm at Martyr Worthy, just NE of Winchester. The initials appear to be BJ, both retrograde; or is it a D rather than a J, not retrograde? Moreover, the two letters share a solitary upper bar, on a type of piece not normally renowned for monograms. Does the piece derive from a mould which has been reworked, to save the task of cutting it anew? Interesting questions; and, of course, if a J, that limits how early the piece can be; too far back in the 18th century and it would probably have been an I.



Just as J changes to I, so V changes to U; at what date, we ask? 17th century main series tokens almost always depict I and V. A clue here in Fig.6, a picture of a memorial tablet from the cloisters of Chichester cathedral, where the name BVLL has been twice changed to BULL in the 1730s, a date consistent with what we see on tokens.



## Some more of Forgeais' grenetis pieces: Type 23



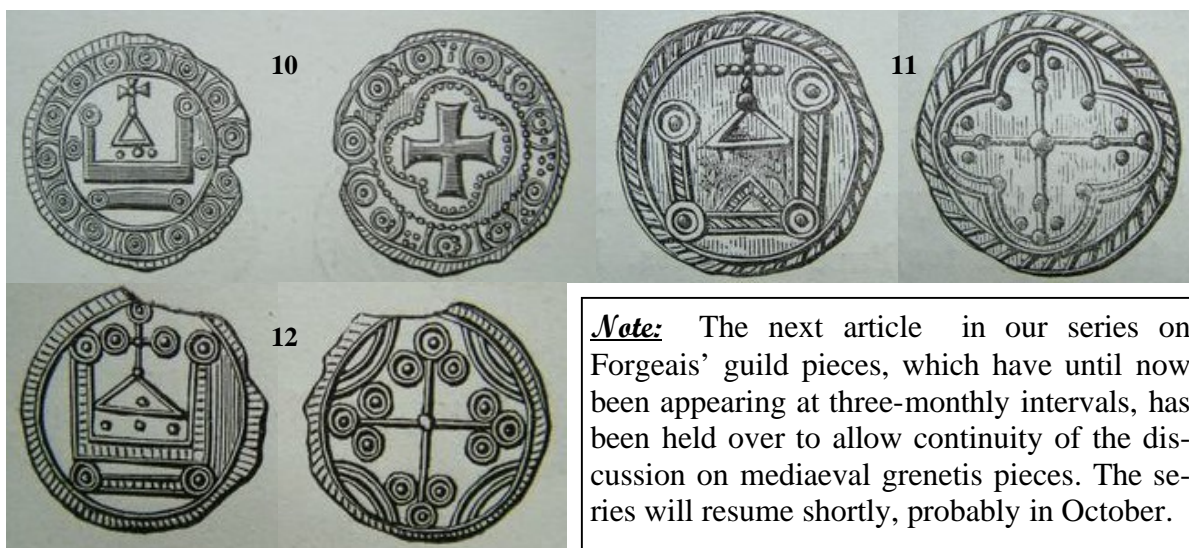
Continuing on from last month, we explore the variations of the French {specifically Parisian} grenetis piece as illustrated by Forgeais. I was going to say the evolution, as some of them are both much larger and quite elaborate; but surprisingly, looking at the dates which Forgeais assigns to them {for better or worse, I do not know if he is right}, many of these pieces are contemporary with, rather than later than, the pieces which we have seen to date.



Last month we looked at some of Forgeais' type 16 obverses, i.e. armorial shields. This month we go to type 23, to what Forgeais calls "imitation du type tournois" or "type monétaire", but which look because of their sloped roofs a little like buildings. This is a type found on the main French coinage; herewith a few of the lead equivalents. With some reluctance I preserve the multiplication factor of 1.5 on the images, for consistency with last month; it is necessary on the pieces at the top, but tends to make those at the bottom look huge!



Nevertheless, it shows the range of size, with some of the largest around the size of the English groat or the French gros; which, presumably, may be relevant. The medium-sized pieces approximate to halfgroat/demi-gros size and the smaller ones to that of the penny or denier; thus, once again, we see a correlation between the sizes of tokens and coins of the realm. However unofficial they were, and variable in quality, it does not look that their intended size was random; most of them appear to have been sized to create an intended monetary value in peoples' mind.



**Note:** The next article in our series on Forgeais' guild pieces, which have until now been appearing at three-monthly intervals, has been held over to allow continuity of the discussion on mediaeval grenetis pieces. The series will resume shortly, probably in October.



## *Where LTT is going next....*

The articles which have appeared in the June and July editions of LTT are the first of a series which will endeavour, in the light of the knowledge obtained in the last four years or so since LTT and my classification system got going, to trace the development of English lead tokens in chronological order. There will be a number of main articles over the coming months which move gradually forward through the centuries {mainly 16th, 17th and 18th}, seeking to illustrate the changes in style and subject matter depicted. In the course of this I hope to attempt some provisional dating, and to explain the origin of some of the more degenerate and later designs which may at first glance seem meaningless. Not all my guesses will be right, in a series so little documented and recorded, and I ask you to forgive my errors; but I hope you enjoy my attempt, and welcome any comments where you may care to write in and constructively either contest or augment my theories.

There will also be, in the course of this exercise {which I hope may eventually result in a book, although I would be doing it primarily for pleasure, so don't expect me to write it against the clock}, a reassessment of the classification system; as previously, expect a few minor tweaks, but nothing too serious. I would hope that, after that, the system will be reasonably final.

## *Cataloguing Hints and Tips {further to March 2009 LTT}*

In preparation for the above exercise, I have been rearranging the pieces in my own collection; hitherto they have gone in trays in order of acquisition, but in order to facilitate comparison and illustration for future purposes I have attempted to regroup them all in order of age and style. I have also discovered in the course of it a small number of pieces which have got displaced when pulled out for photography. With a conventional numismatic series this rearranging according to chosen criteria would present no difficulty, because everything can be readily described; however, reorder several hundred lead tokens and you may have considerable difficulty finding some of them again.

I spoke in March concerning cataloguing, and the desirability of keeping a disciplined list. OK, you have such a list, but finding a token amongst several hundred capable of matching a given description may remind you of proverbs about needles and haystacks. The other way round, you have a piece in your hand; with the vagueness of crude lead, is the description you put in MS Excel's "find" parameter likely to bear much relationship to your earlier attempt when you recorded it? So, strong probability of "no items found". Another way is to measure your piece and look it up by diameter; however, you may have several dozen of anything in the commonest part of the range {i.e.15-22mm}; in addition to which your second attempt at measuring may again not be exactly the same as your first, due to the variable diameter of much crude lead.

A tip, which I have learnt from experience; weight, measured to 0.01 gm, is by far the best identifier, capable of providing a very small shortlist of anything you might want to find. Label each piece in its tray with a unique reference number, record both number and weight on your spreadsheet and, if you can keep that well-maintained, you should not go far wrong.

### *Competition Corner*

In the light of the recent articles about Forgeais' grenetis pieces, readers are invited to mail in their guesses as to the approximate age and findspot location of the piece shown on the right, depicting a moderately standard 6-petal arrangement within a fairly wide-spaced clockwise diagonal grenetis. The weight is 9.68gm and the diameter 23mm. The answer will be revealed in our lead article next month, when this and other pieces of similar origin will be discussed.



## *New Books*

Book reviews are not something which feature very often in these pages, as not many people write books about lead tokens; however, it is a pleasure to be able to report two interesting recent titles which have come to my notice and which are probably not very well known.

The first is “Ephesian Lead Tesserae” by two Turkish authors, Onur Gülbec and Hasan Kireç {Selçuk, 2008}; in paperback, and readily available via the Internet. Written in Turkish with, very considerately, a full English translation alongside, this discusses and illustrates some 269 Roman lead pieces found in the region. The authors attempt to group these into chapters, nearly all of which map exactly onto or into existing Powell classifications:

- Chapter 1: Standing Types {type 32}
- Chapter 2: Animals, including the Ephesian bee {type 19}
- Chapter 3: Masks {fits into type 10}
- Chapter 4: Rosettes {type 1}
- Chapter 5: Plants {type 17}
- Chapter 6: Ephesus Artemisia {fits into type 32}
- Chapter 7: Portraits {type 10}
- Chapter 8: Drinking cup {type 11}
- Chapter 9: Epigraphic data {type 29}
- Chapter 10: Other

The quality of the pictures is high, and they are all well-magnified; albeit not by a common factor, but to a common size. Full details of size and weight are, however, given in each case; and there is also one of the fullest biographies of ancient lead pieces which I have seen, occupying a full two pages. The only significant omissions from the latter were the two works by Overbeck, and I mailed the authors to make them aware both of these and of LTT. They were very appreciative both of the information and the contact, and if anyone wants to make contact with them I can let you have their email address {very conveniently available in the front of the book}; I am sure they will be delighted to hear from any other tesserae enthusiasts.

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“Tokens of Grace”, by Canadian professor Laurie Stanley-Blackwell {Cape Breton University Press, 2006} is another paperback readily available off the Internet; in this case 100 pages of history on the evolution of the Scottish communion service tradition in one part of Canada; specifically, Nova Scotia, which, as its name implies, was populated almost exclusively by Scottish immigrants who took good care that their tradition went and stayed with them. It starts by describing the attitudes and practices prevailing in Scotland in the early years of the 19th century when they left it, and charts in a fascinating manner the way in which those ideas developed over the next century and a bit. One is left feeling that what is described as happening in Canada may well have been typical also of the homeland which they left behind.

If that sounds dull, it is not. There is a communion token {CT} depicted on the front cover and other pictures and references to them inside. The book is extremely well balanced and gives a fascinating insight into tall aspects of the traditions of which CTs were a part; including, it may be said, a plethora of interesting and sometimes humorous anecdotes about the people who participated, the humanity of which brings it all to life. Backed by an extensive set of notes and bibliographic references, this is effectively a most interesting account of what lay behind 19th cent CTs and their usage; to which one may profitably add, when one has read it, by putting “use of communion tokens” into Google. Not often does somebody write 100 pages of text on a lead-related subject; great to see.

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