

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 Please note that the old *LTT* Editor@aal.com address advertised on some earlier versions of *LTT* is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery

A group of five from the Lewes area to start with, all uniface except one. Fig.1, almost certainly 18th cent, combines two themes which are not all that often seen together: a shield surmounted by a sprig is a not uncommon armorial theme {think Guernsey doubles, for example}, but then the common lead-token cross is superimposed. Why bother with the latter? doesn't the shield alone suffice? However, this is not the first cross-quartered piece we have seen in which one quarter is heavily design-filled and the others either slightly-filled or left empty. They are usually symmetric, i.e. with the side quarters balanced, but, anyway, food for thought.



Fig.2 is again armorial; more formally so, with a high-relief {by lead standards} chequered design, and an equally well-serrated rim. The reverse depicts three faint concentric circles, of which two are marked, quite evenly, with pellets. It doesn't feel quite typical and, with rouelles in mind, one wonders whether it might be French. Fig.3 is the armorial carried to the opposite extreme of crudity; an X within a square within a square within a square. Three nested squares, to go with the previous three nested circles; however, this one feels rather less up-market than Fig.2.

Fig.4, depicts trade or personal arms which are actually better and more finely drawn than Figs.1 or 3, but which have unfortunately been proved rather less durable in consequence. Those with knowledge of guild arms may care to conjecture the issuer's trade; or if not trade, he is probably gentry. Fig.5 is a pleasant little rose, almost shaped like the rose it depicts; probably by coincidence, but possibly by local tradition, it continues the triple-nesting theme of Figs.2-3.

Fig.6 comes from the neighbouring county, Kent, but looks considerably earlier than the 17th and 18th cent Sussex pieces which we have looked at above. It is, however, still 16mm across, even if it does have a mediaeval design, so a 17th rather than 16th cent origin is certainly possible. Note the radial gretis, a 16th cent evolution of a 15th cent concept, and the typical cross which goes with it; however, what is not typical, and indeed somewhat innovative, is the contents of the quarters. No mere pellets here, there are four of something sitting, one in each quarter on the outside of the rim; birds, crowns or coat-hangers, as takes your imagination. Anybody who has any other suggestions, please write in...

In May we published Fig.7, found near Bishops Stortford and sent in by Phil Blake. He has since contacted Laura McLean, the Essex FLO, who has kindly confirmed that it is a disc from an incomplete post-medieval cloth seal. The reference ID on the PAS Database is ESS-6CDA76, for those who would like to follow it up.



My thanks to Gerald Miles for sending in Fig.8, 17mm in diameter and found near Devizes. Whilst birds are usually depicted in full, "head and shoulders" portraits are not unknown. One is reminded of the illegal Lundy Island puffin coinage, particularly the half puffin value, struck in 1929. Another example is shown in Fig.9.



## Lead Tokens modelled on Milled Copper Coins



In 1672 England introduced the modern regal milled coinage; here-with one of the first copper pieces {Fig.1}, with examples of later pieces from the reigns of each of the first three Georges {Figs.4,5,8 respectively}. Fig.8 is from one of the issues produced by Matthew Boulton and James Watt, reflecting the new manufacturing methods of the Industrial Revolution. There were three such issues, all slightly different, dated 1797,1799 and 1806/07. For the most part lead token

designers went their own way, but every so often one of them would choose the official coinage as his model. When they do, it is interesting to compare their efforts with those of the official mint.

Attempting to copy both sides of a regal coin might, even if not very well executed, be regarded as an attempt at forgery; attempting to copy one only, and introducing some more convention crude lead design on the other, was presumably not. Then, when you had decided which side to copy, there was a choice between draw-it-yourself and use an existing piece as a mould-model. If taking the latter approach, the mould was presumably clay rather than chalk. Fig.2 looks well drawn but, due to the presence of a radial grenetis, one presumes that Britannia was hand-drawn; if so, full marks to the maker for a good effort. I imagine that sinking a real farthing in clay, extracting it and then reworking the rim might have been thought rather too much to attempt. The piece is uniface, and hence anonymous.



The head of Fig.3 is clearly hand-drawn and, from comparison with the regal coins of George I and II {Fig.4-5} is clearly based on the former, despite bearing on the reverse a date, 1756, well towards the end of the latter's reign. The inscription is "Georg Rex", with three letters curtailed, and better for it; cramming in another three letters would spoil the effect. The issuer, probably KB rather than RB, is happy to admit his identity; unlike Fig.6, where a floral design substitutes for the initials. These, of which a number of identical specimens are known, are associated specifically with the hamlet of Stone, on the Isle of Oxney, a remote part of Romney Marsh. It is conjectured that they may have had something to do with the smuggling community in those parts, which would explain the anonymity; but whether or not, it would appear that in this case an original copper coin of George II has been used as a model for the obverse, without separate engraving. It will be seen, by comparing Figs.5-6, that the quality and depth of the king's features, obtained by this method, are not very great.



Finally, Fig.7, a lead piece clearly created by sinking a regal farthing of 1806 {Fig.8} into a mould, again with very weak effect, but combined with a contrastingly strong double-exergue reverse of more



typical lead style, complete with issuer initials and a date almost twenty years later. These are interesting pieces, and I look forward to hearing of more examples.





## They may be Not What they Look



The first thing which strikes you about the reverse of Fig.1 is its very 17th cent token look, with its issuer's name, Richard Allen, around the outside. It isn't, of course; at 28-30mm it is far too big, nor is the style of the armorial obverse in keeping. The date is stated, albeit faintly amidst the heraldry: 1617. It is a seal; there are a number like it at this date, and the first reference to reach for, if you believe the piece is British, is Geoff Egan's "Lead Cloth Seals and

Related Items in the British Museum" {BM Occasional Papers 93}. Its contents may look a little miscellaneous, but they are well illustrated with both photographs and line drawings.



Figs 2-3 look rather boring in comparison; bog-standard type 2s, you may think. Letters, numerals, nothing more; thousands of those. However, these are communion tokens, however much like agricultural pieces they look. Perhaps the clues are that they look just that little too neat, and that 17th cent token triads were out of favour by this date. Whilst there were plenty of surnames beginning with both K and M, bear in mind that these letters may stand for Kirk and Minister respectively, preceding the initial(s) of parish or man accordingly. Figs 2-3 are both well-known CTs, issued by Alexander Scott of Meikle {Perth} and Thomas Ker of Balermينو {Fife}. Note, however, that Fig.3's neatness does not preclude it from the upside-down and mirror-image characters so well known to us elsewhere.

Fig.4 has, unusually three rows of letters, one at least of them containing more than two characters. It would appear that there are two possibilities; either that they are part of a larger piece of text which has gone off flan, or that they are a set of personal initials or codes. OK, I've cheated; I haven't shown you the ugly blob on the reverse, which suggests that is almost certainly a seal, but the question remains: what do those letters stand for? Multiple initials might stand for some group of people on authority, like churchwardens or poor law administrators, the modern equivalent of Roman triumvirates; and indeed such group initials are not unknown on main series 17th tokens, so be prepared for their possible appearance on crude lead.

An example of the latter phenomenon from Alton, Hants, is shown in Fig.5 {Williamson, Hant.7}. Gavin Scott, until recently a local, has kindly attempted to identify the individuals concerned:

"These are usually regarded as town pieces issued by an association of traders in the High Street or Market Place, most likely:

- IH = John Hockley, mercer/tallow chandler, Market Place
- TB = Thomas Braman, whose father was a weaver
- LL = Lawrence Lamport, tallow chandler, High Street"



Fig.6 is a type 3 cartwheel with a difference; its spokes don't go to the edge, and they have little hooks on. Most probably it is meant to represent a Catherine wheel, or even more likely a water wheel; in the latter case, with the hooks intended to support large containers, which would be filled from a pool below and emptied at some upper part of the wheel's rotation. The two symmetrical pieces of damage at the side give the game away; it is not a token, more likely a badge whose clasps had become broken. Worn perhaps by those who operated the machinery, as a symbol of their authority?