

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 Please note that the old LTTeditor@aol.com address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery



Fig.1, clearly a masonic token, was found by reader Peter Richards near Colchester. The design is the same both sides, so presumably the issuer felt he had nothing further to say on the second, which rather implies that it was a pass rather than pseudo-currency; and hence, not likely to be subject to the usual size rules which are so often handy for dating unofficial money. I place alongside it a number of other pieces which also have some hint of freemasonry about them {Figs.2-5}, and suggest that most if not all of them are likely to be 18th century. It will be seen that sometimes the familiar compasses device can be confused with letters; but whilst XX is an unlikely combination, barred "A"s of various designs {Fig.3, bottom of Fig.5} are rather more ambiguous.



Next up, a considerably better than average Jewish plumma found in the parish of Lynsted, Kent {Fig.6}, followed by a rather token-like seal {Fig.7} from Dutch reader Ton Wolf. One side hints at a full length figure, and the other at a half-length figure, running or waving their limbs around; which whilst all very amusing, seems to be a surprisingly common theme. It would be interested to know with what frequency that interpretation was the intention.

Fig.8, a 21mm piece which I have magnified 3:2 for effect, comes courtesy of Gavin Phillips and John Gough of the Ashfield Metal Detecting Club, in Nottinghamshire. It depicts a man standing, with possibly two initials, C and W, flanking. Or alternatively, could the would-be C be the tail, and the W the head, of a running animal? Intriguing.



To wind up Picture Gallery this month, a pleasant little group of 18th cent pieces {Figs.9-13} all found around the Epsom/Ewell area of Surrey.

## A Thameside Selection

My thanks to John Mills for this month's excellent little collection, mostly found on the Thames foreshore near the Isle of Dogs. The exceptions, where they occur, are noted. As many of the pieces are very small, I have magnified them by a ratio of 3:2



1. Not convinced this is intended to be a sailing boat, as the upright is too thick and too upright. Other possibilities include a crossbow {although perhaps the 17th cent is too late for such an object?}, or a candle in a holder. 18mm; Oxfordshire provenance.
2. I am wondering whether this is a humorous attempt to turn the heart into a face, with the crescents being the eyebrows? 22mm.
3. An extremely pleasant rendering of a basically quite common type. Both the artwork and the condition stand out. 20mm.
4. Simple stock design but clear and pleasantly different. Star of David? 16mm; Essex provenance.



5. Man with club/staff, late 16c; the finder informs me that he is St. Christopher, holding a staff and carrying the child Jesus on his shoulders. An unusual design, and good to see. 11mm.
6. Relatively poor condition, but these four-numerals-in-a-square are a design subseries worth tracing and which I am always interested to see examples of. The range of dates roughly corresponds to those of the Commonwealth and 16/48, therefore, is one of the earliest. I am not sure whether I have seen a 16/47 or not; I think I may have. In the Williamson series, which is generally reckoned to have started after the execution of the king on 30 Jan 1648-49, pieces dated 1648 are rather special, as there are only 7-8 weeks for them to be issued before New Years Day {1649} on 25 March. He only lists about ten or eleven, if I recall. However, lead pieces do not have the same time constraint, so the date 1648 is probably less significant. Nevertheless, to anybody familiar with the main series, it causes them to prick up their ears. 13mm.
7. Letters flanking figure; not all that common at this date, and very pleasing to see. I favour initials VH rather than RH. Who is the lady? An actress? A barmaid? The landlady of the inn? 13mm.
8. A typical early-mid 17th cent lead, probably issued by a grocer; a poorish piece, but probably depicting scales, and with a pair of wheatsheaves or tobacco roles flanking. 14mm.
9. Pleasant heraldic lion; at 12mm, slightly favour late 16c rather than early 17c. Note barred A, typical of the time. 12mm.
10. Probably intended to be a sun in splendour, for an establishment called simply "The Sun". Dating comment as last, although the lettering has a little bit more of an early 17c look about it. 12mm.



11. An incuse version of a mid-17th cent lead, with blank reverse. A London find, despite its degeneracy, hinting that maybe not all the capital's issuers availed themselves of its better quality manufacturers. However, perhaps it arrived from elsewhere! 12mm.
12. An attractive king's head, not untypical of the time. 12mm.



13. Degenerate evolution of a BNJ54 type M, probably c.1500. 11mm.
14. Wonderful! A full-blooded BNJ54 type M nine-men's morris in decent condition. A pleasure to see. The specimen illustrated in BNJ54 {no.35} has a slightly defective version of the 9MM board with only two squares instead of three, but this has the full thing. 11mm.
15. Another BNJ54 type M, with the main subject of no.57 paired with the clockwise ray border and ring-pellet reverse of nos.1-46 {refs are to pieces in BNJ, not here}. The Mitchiner/Skinner article is by no means exhaustive and I expect to find a number of these cross-fertilisations. 11mm.
16. Very good condition early pictorial, BNJ53 type D. Reasonably typical, but a delightful piece of artwork; when they are this good, the missing fragment somehow doesn't matter too much. 17mm.



17. Ah, one of the celebrated early 16c black-letter pieces, not all that common, and in very good condition. At least I presume that that is an inscription round the edge, rather than filler? or perhaps a bit of each. Lovely to see, but horrendous to read; nobody finds these easy. 21mm.
18. Well, there's a thing. From style, size and texture we are definitely back into the BNJ54 type O black letter period again, except that there is almost certainly no inscription. There is an awful lot happening on the reverse, and one does not know whether to read significance into some of it or not; for example, whether the difference between two, three and four oblique strokes is of any great relevance. Added to all of which, it is in exceedingly good nick. 21mm.



19. (Merchant mark with flanking letters G-C; interesting in that most pieces show one or the other but not both. The size, 16mm, suggests mid-17c; reverse indeterminate. A similar piece, slightly smaller at 14mm but unhappily not good enough to picture, shows a similar mark with G-P or G-R flanking. It would be interesting to know if and how they link. The second piece is probably early 17c.
20. Nearer mid-17c. W on one side is an initial; is that a figure on the reverse, or a second initial. Would be nice to think that it is a guy sitting down trying to hammer something, but I am not sure that is what is intended. Turn it round and it probably looks like something else. 15mm.
21. The 10mm diameter suggests c.1500, but stylistically this is late-16c, even very early 17c. The size is a red herring; the original piece is actually larger than that, probably about 12-13mm, but has suffered two truncations due to the round punch which formed it being stamped down near

the corner of the sheet and overlapping two edges. 17th cent main series pieces are frequently seen with straight or arced cuts out of their edges due to overlapping either of two punch cuts or one punch cut and one edge, and it can happen when tokens are punched out of lead sheet as well. Overlapping of a punch cut with two edges is possible, but obviously considerably rarer, due to the probability of circumstances required to bring it about.

The concept of two pictorial sides {in this case dog and standing figure} is more Roman than Elizabethan, in that one would expect on a British token of this age to find some hint of identity, either initial or merchant mark. Possibly, therefore, the badly worn standing figure is a misinterpretation, and may be a pair of initials.



22. This is genuine c.1500 ecclesiastical. The 6-like figure would be taken as a lituus {priestly implement} if encountered on a tessera, but here is a Lombardic letter. 10mm.
23. The Tudor Rose is a popular theme at this date, c.1600. The second side is indeterminate, probably a merchant mark. 13mm
24. Towers of this type are encountered on the main series 17th cent tokens of various towns {e.g. Newbury, Barnstaple} and it is no surprise to find them on lead as well. Early 17c, and 13mm.
25. A delightful swan, with probably a merchant mark on the other side. 15mm.
26. Shield; somebody's arms, but anyone's guess whose! Very early 17c, at a guess. 13mm and wafer thin, like a hammered coin.



27. A real oddity, but a very interesting one. It is difficult to work out whether most of the central design is worn away or whether it never existed in the first place; what little remains appears to be a date, 1n47. Whether "n" is 5 or 6 is open to debate {a "5" seems the favourite}, with neither option exactly ringing true. The piece is pewter and 28mm diameter, which is way out of place for an early date; from the size one might guess early-mid 18c; however, the one thing that the missing numeral in the date is not is a 7. There is a vague attempt at outer-rim inscription, the result of which looks more like a late Chinese cash than anything Western. Could it be an 18<sup>th</sup> cent imitation of a main series 17<sup>th</sup> cent token by someone who was totally illiterate and not very skilled? That is one option, that the maker was copying an original with very little, if any, understanding of its detail; and that also would also explain an irrelevant date. Alternatively we could take the "5" as genuine, and take the piece as a mid-16th cent attempt with the design based on a degenerate grenetis piece.
28. An attractive depiction of a bird, with initials on the other side. The small double exergue dates it to somewhere around 1700, or shortly after. 24mm.



## Readers' Letters - Supplement on Continental Pieces

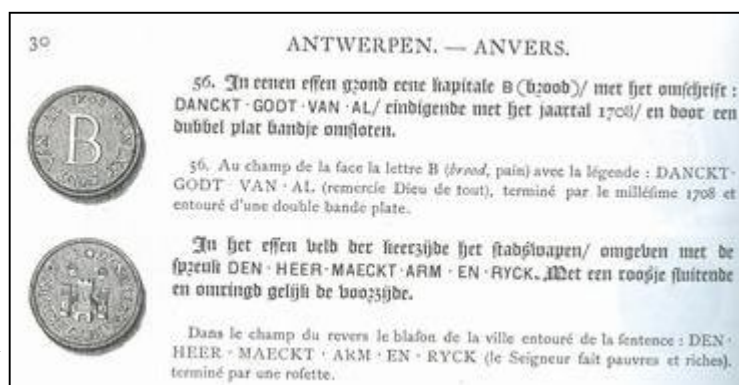
My thanks to Belgian token enthusiast Hendrik, who has just discovered LTT and has been recently working through the back numbers, for a number of comments on various continental pieces which have appeared in earlier editions.

When I wrote the article in LTT\_78 {Oct 2011}, I knew the identity of some of the pieces but did not include them because I did not want weight of minor detail to detract from the overall theme. Those who don't want the technicalities, please ignore, but for those who are interested:

1. Bruges: St Salvator's church broodpenning, i.e. bread penny. Ref: De Schodt 97.
2. Uncertain.
3. Liège, St Jacques (méreau capitulaire ?)  
Ref: Dengis Me 04-01 or De Mey 1084.
4. Liège, St Jacques (méreau pour l'assistance aux offices ?)  
Ref: Dengis Me 04-02 or De Mey 1165.
5. Leuven St.Jacques {bread token}; De Mey 1085.
6. As (5) above; another value in the same series.
7. Bruges: Church of the Notre Dame. DIES = DISCH =table, so 2 is a table number.  
Ref: Minard van Hoorebeke 171, or De Schodt 81
8. Bruges: Méreau for the children of the third class  
Ref: Minard van Hoorebeke 194, or De Schodt 100
9. Antwerp; Ref: Minard van Hoorebeke 56, see illustration from book below.
10. Uncertain.
11. German, Elberfeld: see <http://www.numismatikforum.de/viewtopic.php?f=63&t=25108> if you speak German.
12. Bruges: Table of the poor( disch) of Saint Donat.  
Ref: Minard van Hoorebeke 211, or De Schodt 105
13. Brussels: St Jacobs church, Caudenberg. Ref: Minard van Hoorebeke 266.



To these may I now add the piece shown above, which is another Bruges bread piece {De Schodt 81}; OLV stands for Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe, which translates to "Our Lady", i.e. the church of Notre Dame. "Disch" again means table, and "Broot Teecken" is "Bread Token". Altogether, the piece does not look unlike a Scottish communion token.



The titles of the De Schodt and De Mey books are in the bibliography already. L.Minard van Hoorebeke's "Description de mereaux et autres objets anciens des gildes et corps de metiers...", and comes in three volumes; Hendrik says they cover (i) Ghent, (ii) Netherlands (iii) other parts of Flanders. Can't comment, I haven't seen them in the flesh. Have only just located the Dengis book, so not yet familiar. Nor have I yet got to the bottom of phrases like "méreau capitulaire"; although, if you put the phrase into Google Books, you will find that the top hit gives a very interesting article {in French} which I had not previously seen and have not yet had a chance to read.

Sorry if some of that is a bit heavy. I'll hold back on Hendrik's other observations, which are less so, until next time. I'll also reissue the bibliography shortly, to include some of these European titles.