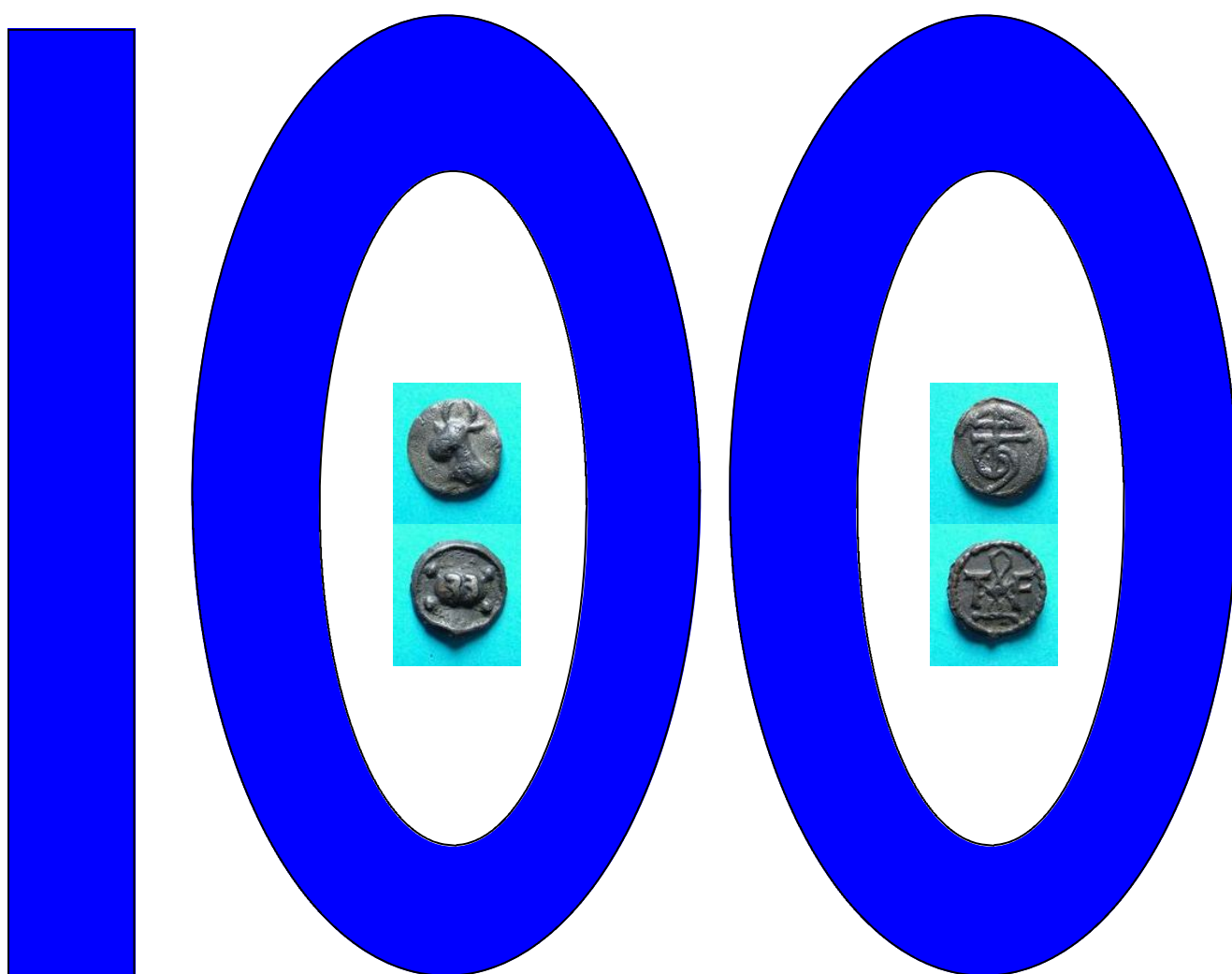


Editor: David Powell

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 Please note that the old LTTeditor@aol.com address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

Welcome to LTT's 100th Edition



Next Month's Christmas Edition:

Please note that, as in other recent years, there will be editions of LTT in both December and January; so, please remember to look out for our Christmas special next month! It will be predominantly dedicated to catching up on readers' correspondence.

Communion Token Update

Another in our “Survey the Scene” series of recaps, whereby we put up a spread of pieces of one type for comparison. This time we feature a selection of communion tokens {CTs}, or in some cases would-be CTs, which are mostly not in Burzinski; or, where they are, he has no idea where they come from. Parishes, as derived from approximate findspots, are as listed below:



- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Panbride, Angus | 6. New Machar, Aberdeen | 10. Perth |
| 2. Panbride, Angus | 7. Brampton, N'land | 11. Leith, Midlothian |
| 3. Newburgh, Fife | 8. ?? - Burz.7680 | 12. Cupar, Fife ?? |
| 4. Abercorn, W.Loathian ?? | 9. ?? - Burz.7681 | 13. Strathmiglo, Fife |
| 5. Abercorn, W.Loathian ?? | | |

The rest have a more dubious CT provenance. Figs 14-15 were acquired with a batch of CTs, but could easily be commercial; having said which, the 1800 piece suggests Kirkcudbrightshire, which had a tendency towards incuse lettering at about that date, plus a second initial K for Kirk to boot. As for Fig.15, apart from its original travelling companions, we have nothing to suggest whether WW is a minister or a mercer. Figs.16-17 meanwhile, again incuse, have a reasonable appearance for a CT except that they were found in that well-known Scottish Presbyterian hotspot called.....Kent. Not sure exactly where, but with that colouring I would not be too surprised to hear that they were fished out of the Thames.

Hitherto unknown CTs are usually of early date and style, and that is certainly the case with many here, e.g.Figs.1-7,12,13. Thanks to Fasti {printed records of ministers}, we know that Fig.2 was issued by Rev.Andrew Drummond, who was Panbridge's incumbent from 1593 to 1635; an earlier date, indeed, than I would have guessed from the style. Fig.8 is a little later, and hints stylistically that it may come from Perthshire or Fife. Not even Fasti has been able to crack who FFS was on Fig.9, despite its 19th cent date and unusual initials. Figs.10-11 are from the white metal era and hence even later. CT expert Andrew Macmillan, when shown Fig.10, conjectured that EE {again an unusual combination} might stand for Ebenezer Erskine, one of the primary movers in the founding of the Secession Church in 1731; however, since Erskine died in 1754, these initials would then have to be those of a church named after him, rather than the man himself.

Finally, the copper pieces of Figs.18-20; are they mavericks, i.e. imitations, or the real thing? Fig.18 which came with Figs.14-15. has the best change of being genuine; a second initial of K {for Kirk} always increases the chances, and both copper piece and scrolled lettering are known in small quantities. But the others?? Why would one want to make pseudo-communion tokens? All three are uniface.



Bits and Pieces {literally}

Figs 1-14 all turned up recently in a group of pieces with Thames provenance, prompting a few questions about how many of them were malformed, how many moulded as such, how many damaged and how many cut after manufacture.



We are all very much aware that silver pennies were cut in late mediaeval times to produce farthings and halfpennies, and Figs.16-22 are evidence that lead was sometimes treated likewise; the cross, so often employed as a central part of the design, provided a convenient cutting line for doing so when required. We think in turn of one cut to make two halfpennies and a second to make four farthings, although I am told that three-farthing pieces, with one quarter cut out, are not unknown. They are very rare; I have never seen one, and would love to find one, whether in lead or silver.

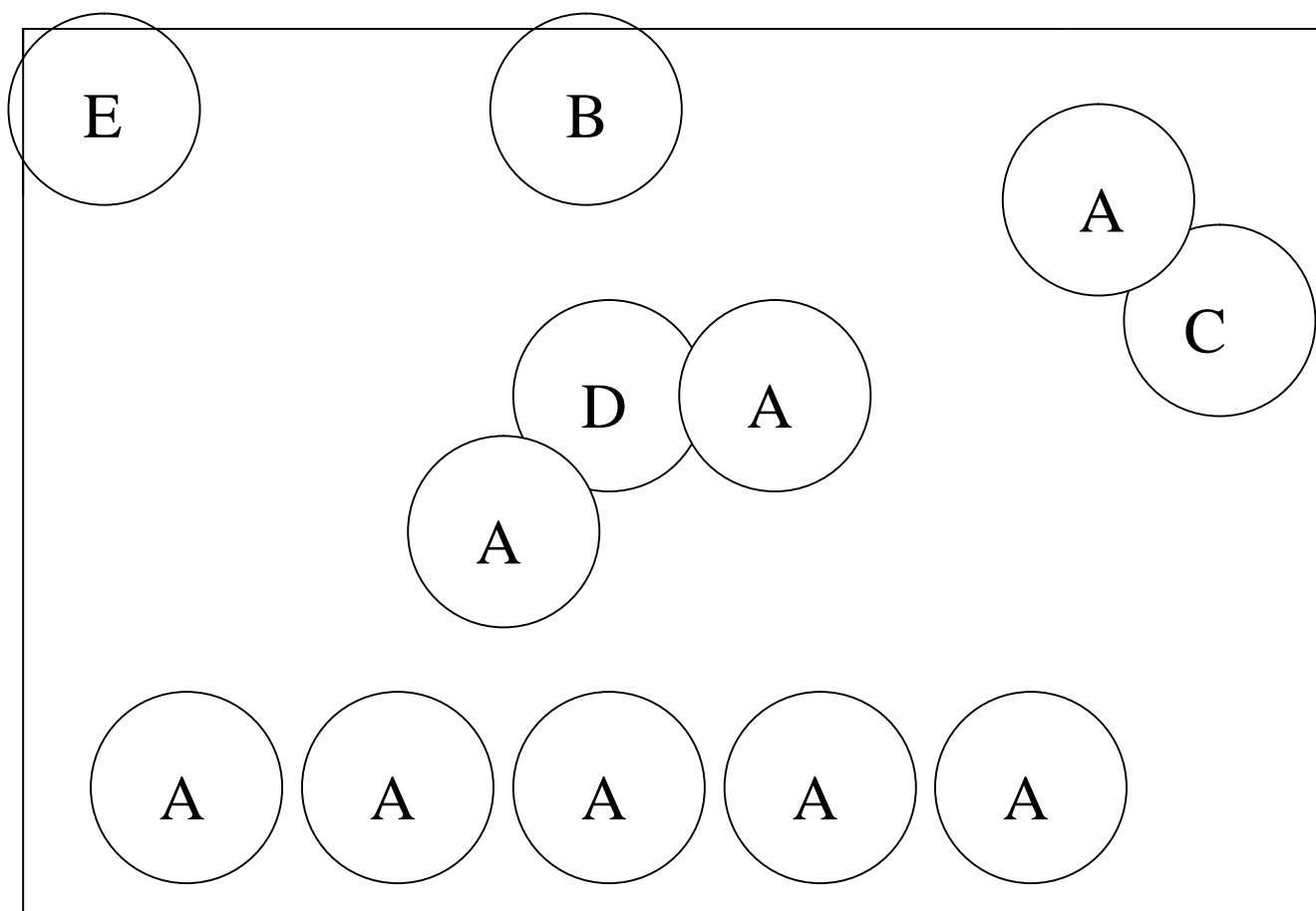
In the times when the practice originated, there were no smaller coins than the penny, so there was no other means of producing smaller coins; and although the practice of cutting did probably continue out of habit for some while after smaller values appeared, or because such coins were not sufficiently numerous, there are nevertheless many partial tokens of much later date. Some can be put down to defective manufacture or implement damage in the ground, and there are examples of both amongst Figs.1-10; however, when the cut approximates to an exact halving or quartering it can be difficult to tell. Not all of Figs.1-10 are of mediaeval type; some are early stock tokens other than crosses, and Figs.2,9 particularly look as if they are 17th cent at least. Two are grids, which is probably the next best design after the cross for halving; one is a cross and pellets, but the halving is not along the cross. All of which begs the question; did people sometimes halve lead tokens regardless of what was on them?

As to Figs 1-10, they look to be cut in approximately descending order of intention. Figs.11-14 are probably a different category; their irregular shape suggests that they may have been struck as such for shycocks, discussed before,; i.e. to be thrown at, for entertainment. Fig.15, however, catches the cutter in mid-action; he has marked the pieces out for quartering, but has not yet done it! It would be good to see a cross-and-pellets, rather than a blank, thus prepared.

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What now of Fig.23? This is clearly a later and larger piece, probably 18th cent provincial, with a piece out of it; moreover, the angle of the cutout is not far off a right-angle. Deliberate, or a metal weakness? I incline to the latter, although one can conceive the idea of pincering out as some sort of invalidation. A bit like an attendant tearing the stub off a ticket today.





I've mentioned tokens with bits out of them, rather than cut into bits, before. Have you ever wondered about those little slivers missing out of the edges of 17th cent tokens, leaving a straight line or an arc where the piece should be perfectly round?

It happens on lead as well, albeit not so frequently; not where the whole thing is moulded, obviously, but where the piece is struck out of pre-prepared lead sheet.

Basically, if you strike round tokens or blanks for round tokens out of sheet metal the ideal which you are aiming for is result A in the diagram above. If everything goes according to plan, you will get result A every time, in such a manner as to get the maximum number of pieces out of the sheet. However, if you strike the piece out with your punch overlapping the edge of the sheet you will get result B {Figs.24-26}, and if you do it with your punch overlapping the edge of a previous striking you will get result C {Figs.27-28}. Finally, if you really want to make a right mess of it, you can compound your errors and finish up with something like D or E.

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Finally, in this section on fragments, a cut communion token, from Balquhider, Perthshire {Fig.29}. No, it doesn't mean top half for the bread and bottom for the wine, for those who only want one course; at least I don't think it does. More likely the cutting is a method of invalidation after withdrawal from use.



Off the subject of cut pieces totally, but for those who really want to see an irreverent re-use of a redundant communion token, take a look at Michael Shutt's blog for the first day of New Year 2014: <http://communiontokens.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/an-outlaw-communion-token-for-new-year.html> Good for one drink..... well, I suppose that is one way of putting it! Not the original issuer's choice of wording, I presume.

Dutch Beacon Tokens

My thanks once again to Alex Kussendrager, who this time has been researching the Dutch beacon tokens discussed fleetingly in LTT_13 and coming up with a far more detailed explanation than was possible previously. To recap, herewith the original illustrations, plus one of Alex's own {1832} and one from L. Minard-Van Hoorebeke 's 1878 reference work on Dutch guild tokens.



For a map of the relevant area, please use <http://www.openstreetmap.nl/>, the Netherlands Open Street Map facility, and navigate SSW of Amsterdam until you get to Dordrecht, below and somewhat to the SE of Rotterdam. Below that you will see a river, the Hollands Diep, running east-west, with a small town, Willemstadt, situated on a promontory at a strategic junction of waterways.

The first beacon in Willemstad was established in 1696 by order of Prince William III. For the first three years the city authorities operated the beacon, but after three years they leased it out because the revenues were low. The lessee maintained it and cleaned it twice weekly in return for a toll on all passing shipping. In 1722 the first beacon was replaced and the authorities resumed control.

According to Alex, a lease of the lighthouse survives, dated 2 May 1716. He has so far seen, or knows of, 54 pieces, of which:

- Forty bear the letters WW, and have dates in the range 1717-1803.
- Fourteen bear the letters WS, and have dates in the range 1816-1832.

It may be presumed that there are probably other dates, yet to be found, in the intermediate range.

The values found are 6, 12, and 24 {stuiver} throughout the range, and 18 {stuiver} from c.1800 only. These values tie up with the toll charges mentioned in the 1716 lease which are, according to the type of vessel and its trade, invariably {or at least, where exemption is not granted} one or other of these three early values: 6, 12, and 24 stuivers. The 24 stuiver value is rarest, and interestingly, all four examples known to Alex have been found abroad, including one in Canterbury. However, it is not surprising that the best ships, capable of travelling abroad, attracted the highest rate.

As to individual towns in the area, Waspik, to the East along the Hollands Diep river, is by far the most predominant findspot for the earlier WW pieces, but they have also been found in Meppel, Utrecht and Bergum. The later WS pieces have been found in Waspik, Vuren and Tholen.

Minard-Van Hoorebeke lists these pieces as coming from Roermond, but Alex believes that they depict the arms of Willemstadt; he got no joy when researching Roermond, but on abandoning that line and starting to examine the pieces in the light of his other heraldic knowledge it all suddenly started to fit into place.

By the time the Hollands Diep reaches Willemstad it is about 3km wide. In the 17th-18th cents Dordrecht was one of the most important places in Holland and, because of the silting up of the river Meuse Brielse, all ships to or from Rotterdam and Dordrecht during the period c.1740-1830 had to go through the Hollands Diep. The volume of shipping was increasing all the time, and the beacon toll therefore made a significant amount of money for the civic coffers of Willemstad.