

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@powell18041.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 Please note that the old LTTeditor@aol.com address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.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

First up this month, Fig.1, a very attractive half-crown-sized Hampshire find, courtesy of Philip Mer-nick. The somewhat enigmatic wording, in two lines, appears to read something like “KING/EVER”, which suggests superficially that it might be a lead medal-lion issued as a show of loyalty to Charles I. However, the lettering is not wholly clear, and the style and size both seem to suggest a mid-18th cent gentry piece. Is the would-be “Kinge-” a placename, for example? nothing quite seems to fit. I will leave others to suggest the period of the hairstyle; if you feel you know, please write in.



Another nice portrait, which again our sartorial experts may like to try their hand at dating, is Fig.2. A Thames find by Malcolm Duff, the piece is this time only 19mm and uniface; the figure seems to be wearing a beret, and is perhaps nautical. From the size, the last third of the 17th cent seems a reasonable date.



From the same period come the above motley selection of pieces which live on the token/seal border-line; they have a fair amount in common, and I would welcome any theories as to exactly what they are. You have seen a few of them before, but not all. Their frequently occurring features are that:

- ◇ They approximate more closely in style to the Williamson pieces than most crude lead.
- ◇ They are mostly uniface, and have a tendency to be quite light-coloured.
- ◇ Quite a proportion of them have county names on them, sometimes preceded by “Com” (= county), usually but not exclusively those of southern, and particularly south-western, England.

Counties mentioned in this selection include Gloucs, Dorset, Berks, Bucks, Oxon and, up the other end of the country, Yorks. One bears the name of a city, Exon (= Exeter), and similar designs from Somerset and Devon have been seen, occasionally on multi-part seals. A few have two or four digit dates, typically 1660s or 1670s although I do not know the range; where only two, take it that the “16” in front is implied.

My thanks to Gloucestershire reader John Bromley for the two very light examples.

Was Lead used for WW2 Camp Coinages?

The piece shown here is probably just about the most modern piece shown in these pages. Made from some lead-based alloy which is not quite our usual white metal or pewter, but not too far off, it comes from a lady, Cathy, who recently had cause to sort out her late grandfather's house. It is very chunky, about 3½mm thick, and weighs 27.17gm; i.e. nearly an ounce.



The design is identical both sides: date 1945 at the top, CRC in the middle, and the number 100, presumably a value, below. It feels every bit like a prisoner-of-war piece, or if not at least that of some temporary camp. CRC is presumably the name of the camp or the issuing authority, in what language we know not, but quite possibly the two "C"s may stand for Camp Coinage.

One experienced numismatist voiced the opinion that it looked like a modern fabrication, designed as a gimmick, and indeed to some extent it does; but the previous owner was not a coin or token collector and had had it in the back of a drawer for most of the years since its purported date of issue in 1945. Moreover, he had had a varied and colourful Army career, during the latter part of which he had had the misfortune to finish up as a prisoner of war. We have seen in these pages time and time again the tokens put together in the 14th to 19th centuries by those of modest skill, opportunity and resource; so why not in the 20th? Nearly every coin or token in modern times is manufactured by sophisticated machinery, so that we have little experience of seeing what our contemporaries might produce if asked to produce one unaided from first principles in the dire conditions which a war camp might provide.

Cathy didn't know very much about her grandfather's wartime history because he didn't care to talk about it a lot but, as she cleared the house and came across other ephemera and artefacts, more became apparent. It turned out that he was a POW in Oflag IX-A/H, which was in Spangenberg Castle in north eastern Hesse, Germany. He had cause to wander around Germany after the war was over, and labels on various items indicated the locations from which they were acquired, in particular the northern German town of Eschwege. We still haven't cracked what CRC stands for, and Cathy would very much like to know the rest of the story. Does anyone out there please have any other knowledge of homemade WW2 camp coinages, or where this one might come from? Please mail in, if so.

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The Mystery Horse: Problem Solved

The unusual piece on the right, of Scottish provenance, previously appeared on the front page of LTT_104. My thanks to George Ainslie for revealing its story:



“The token found in Northumberland is, as you suggest at one point, more modern than it appears. It is one of a series of about 12 'waymerks' issued about 10 - 20 years ago and placed in specially commissioned 'kists' at various points on different sections along the Southern Upland Way, a well-known long distance coast-to-coast walk across Southern Scotland.

As I recall the merks could be found by following clues and were free for the taking as souvenirs with the request that only one per person be taken. They were meant to add a fresh dimension to the Way and reflect the history of the region. The example illustrated shows a Border Reiver (cattle thief/local hero/bandit). The design was probably based on a much older sculpture or illustration.”

A Full-Name Lead Piece from Southfleet, Kent

Lead tokens with full names and addresses on are a rarity, and I must thank Richard Greene for notifying me of a fine example which he found about two miles from its original issuer's home in Southfleet, Kent. This village is just SW of Gravesend. It is a fine piece, in good condition, but regrettably the farmer on whose site it was found would not give Richard and I permission to publish the photograph. For the record, the description is as follows:

- ⇒ Obv: IOHN / GARLAND / AT SOVTH / FLEET / KENT in five lines
- ⇒ Rev: Fine depiction of a Catherine wheel with well marked paddles or blades, the arms projecting radially from a central hub like a series of hockey sticks, and connected near their outer ends by a circular band

There were a succession of consecutive generations of John Garlands farming in Southfleet from at least the late 17th cent to the late 19th, and the implication of this piece's 26-27mm diameter is that it was issued by one of them in the mid-18th cent. The most likely candidates were born in 1714 and 1741, both dying in 1805. The Victoria County History has little to say, but an online heraldic visitation on Google Books suggests that the Garland's farm was what is now Court Lodge Farm, Dale Road, Southfleet.; i.e. fairly near the centre of the village

The parish church of Southfleet is called St.Nicholas, but Richard informs me that there is a church called St.Catherine near the find spot, which he thinks might have something to do with the choice of reverse. Maybe the Garlands were sufficiently wealthy that they owned a second property, and that this piece was specifically for use on the more distant one. Without the clues of knowing about St. Catherine's church, and that John Garland was a farmer, it might have been tempting to think that he was a miller and the piece a sack token; however, a receipt for a sack, or some other commodity, it still may be.

I dislike having a picture of the token and not being able to show you, so I will convey a sense of it using other pieces. Think the design of Fig.1, a 17th cent main series token, extended to five lines of wording and rendered in the style of Fig.2.

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Imitating the Groat, Italian Style

It seems appropriate, after last month's lead article on the groat and its various imitations, to show this piece kindly sent in by Marco Paganini from the north of Italy. British lead pieces of the pseudo-groat family have multiple circles along the lines of this reverse; albeit usually segmented by the use of radial lines, whereas the bands on Marco's piece are individually segmented. It is fairly unusual in England to see more than two sector-rings; three is occasional, and four, as on Marco's, almost unknown. I am not fully au fait with what groat-like equivalents existed on the continent, but I suspect that this is of the same family. I have occasionally seen examples before.



The reverse, too poor to illustrate, is an example of what is occasionally called the expanded cross type, which looks like a four-petal with flattened ends; or, for 17th cent Williamson fans, the blades of four bakers' peels placed at right-angles. This, also, is seen on English pieces of the 14th cent.

Readers' Correspondence

Whilst still thinking about the Gravesend area from the last page, may I thank Tony Gilbert for his suggestion that LTT_105, Page 5, Fig. 9 {shown again right} might come from another Ifield, now known as Singlewell, which has since been swallowed up by Gravesend as a suburb. I investigated this and found it to be correct; Jeremiah Solomon is in the 1851 census, in charge of a large farm. He died in 1878, and there are various mentions of his family in the parish records. The advantages of local knowledge!



Tony, who is interested in etymology, also commented on the beggar's badge on page 3 of LTT_105, Page 3, Fig. 2, where I had suggested that "M" might stand for mendicant:

"Anglo-Norse 'mendiant' (no 'c') meant beggar but in a different sense, i.e. lesser or not quite right. There were some Beggar Orders, the Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans who were 'mendicants' (L. To beg) in the sense that they could not own property, so they had to ask for alms, which were paid in the form of tithes, gifts, blessings, indulgences, etc.; in addition to which, they grew their own food, reared chickens, pigeons and farmed fish and received animals for roasting on feast days. So not quite the vision of someone sitting on a street corner asking for 'any spare change please?' You state that this piece looks likely to be 14/15th cent, but the derived term mendicant from L. mendicare did not appear in English until the 16th cent, probably via the legal profession. The meanings then probably coalesced or crossed over so that mendicant became the legal term for a street beggar."

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Others have been sending in possible beggars' badges, too; my thanks to Sheila Gunn for Fig.3, uniface, which has a diameter of 35 mm, is 2mm thick, and has a weight of 14.9 grams. The central initials, IH or HI, appear as if those of a commercial token issuer but may equally be those of an authorising parish official or the first part of a parish name. The general weight and size, plus the hole, tend to argue for the badge.



Sheila writes that the piece was found on a farm just outside the small village of Burton in Lonsdale, on the Yorkshire/Lancashire border. The farm's fields are known from other finds to have been used continuously from medieval times up to the present, and the remains of a Norman castle still exist in the village. Sheila thinks that the findspot may be on what was an ancient walkway into the village.



Down in Kent, Gill Davies has found Fig.4 in the village of Charing, near Ashford. It weighs 25.4 gms, is 29mm square and has a hole; i.e. another bulky beast. Recognise these characteristics? the main difference from the Burton piece above being its shape, and its rather unusual use of Roman numerals. There is nothing on either side other than the number, so the identity badge of pauper no.21 seems quite a likely possibility. A tool check might be another possibility in later times, when the borrowing of equipment by factory workers was controlled by such means, and each check hung on a pin on a board behind the counter; but at what time were such practices started?

Another of Gill's Kentish pieces {Fig.5} also has Roman numerals. Found in Egerton, it is the hop token of an unknown issuer; but thanks to Duncan Pennock for pointing out that another Egerton farmer issued 9 and 10 unit pieces in exactly the same style, and quite possibly from the same die. A scarce phenomenon, but not unknown; Alan Henderson's book, piece 45, confirms.



Lead from the Low Countries

Certain of my Dutch and Belgian correspondents are so diligent that you may be seeing this title quite often! My thanks this month to Alex Kussendrager, who has had some further thoughts on the 1743 Dutch beacon token shown as Fig.2 on the back page of LTT_102. According to Minard, who illustrates two fairly similar pieces of 1709 and 1785 in his standard reference work on the tokens of the North Netherlands {pieces 166/7}, this is a poor man's lead from Dordrecht. Alex disputes this; he thinks it probably comes from Den Briel, alternatively Brielle, which has fairly similar arms, and he has found in the latter city's archives not only a reference to "the payment of cape- or firehouse money" but also a statement of 1733 in which the writer declares he has seen "upstairs in the room of the Treasurer-General, a basket with leads with the arms of the city (Brielle) on the stamps, with the year of use."



Alex has written this up at <http://www.loodjes.nl/Brielle.html>, but for those of us who cannot understand his Dutch, suffice it to summarise his argument:

- ◇ 24 Stuivers is a very common value on beacon leads for big ships which make international journeys, as already hinted at in LTT_100. For comparison, the daily pay of a labourer was typically 16-20 stuivers, and a good carpenter 24 stuivers.
- ◇ Dordrecht's arms differ from Brielle's largely in the matter of colouring. The lack of shading on this piece swings the argument somewhat in favour of Brielle, but equally may be due to the limitations of what could be achieved artistically on lead.
- ◇ Charity pieces do not usually have a value on, but only the initial or name of the commodity for which they are to be exchanged, e.g. bread or peat.
- ◇ Beacon pieces are more likely to be found abroad, as this one is suspected of being, than local charity tokens.

Dordrecht also had a beacon, however, and so cannot be wholly ruled out.

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Since I put together the above, Alex has written concerning the piece shown as Fig.4 on the front page of LTT_106, reproduced right, which I thought was a seal; but no, that is apparently a beacon token as well, from Sas van Gent in the province of Zeeland, near the border with Belgium. More about the series as a whole, with other examples, on Alex's website at <http://www.loodjes.nl/>, or the Zeeland pieces specifically at <http://www.loodjes.nl/CZE.html>; if you can't understand the Dutch, just click the hyperlinks and enjoy the pictures.

Back to the specific piece and Alex's notes, one can read "SAS / 1817 / 18 ST"(uivers). The value appears to be counterstruck over another value, possibly the more usual 12 Stuivers. The hole is from the nail which was sometimes used to fasten the token on to the ship for which the toll was paid, so that it couldn't be lost; effectively, it was a proof of payment. The size is typical; mostly they are round, but Alex knows of another oblong one, dated 1811, found near De Schelde, Antwerp.



Alex's last contribution this month is of a very different nature. It was found in Tolsende, one of a number of villages in Zeeland which were lost to the sea, in this case around 1530. Some of his correspondents say it is a broken British cloth seal, others that it is a badge with pin missing, but one thing is unmistakable: that clear English rose. How many delightful would-be tokens suddenly cease to be when you turn them over; but even if they are not tokens, one cannot but appreciate the affinity. For more lead of similar date found at Tolsende, and genuine tokens this time, see Alex's website at <http://www.loodjes.nl/armen/Tolsende%20Groot.gif>