

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 [mail@leadtokens.org.uk](mailto:mail@leadtokens.org.uk) Please note that the old [david@powell8041.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freeserve.co.uk) address advertised on earlier versions of LTT will not be active after 31 May 2017.

## Good Wine Needs No Bush



A superb piece {Fig.1} from one of the contributors to “All Things Lead”, a native of the town from which it derives, along with some extracts from his own notes. I am not exactly sure of the size but I have taken a guess.

“Two possibilities, it could be a tavern token, above the horse there is what appears to be a bush hung roots up, an indication of a house that sold alcoholic drink. Alternatively it could be a farm tally handed to casual workers on delivery of loads and redeemable for cash at the end of the day or week. {Editor: or possibly a sack token, issued as a receipt? LTT\_105 refers}

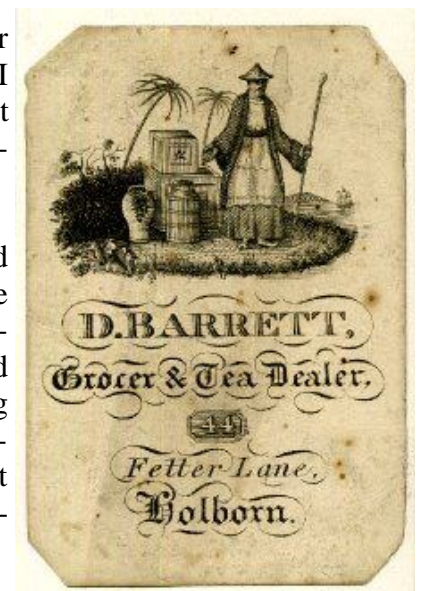
In classical times it was customary to advertise a drinking place by hanging a vine outside, a practice which persisted into quite modern times. In climates such as ours vines were not always available, so ivy, a tree branch, or an uprooted bush were substituted. Hence the expression 'a good wine needs no bush', meaning that a good product does not need advertising, is still in use today. I don't know if the expression was actually coined by Shakespeare, but there is a line in 'As You Like It' that goes 'Just as a good wine needs no bush, then a good play needs no epilogue'.

The only horse related pub-name in Ely was the "Coach and Horses" on Broad Street which shut down in 1915. The earliest landlord known for it, in 1805, was one Edward Bromfield; with the same surname initial as on the piece, although that may be a coincidence.”

“Good Wine Needs No Bush”: I am afraid that the first time I ever heard the phrase at all, let alone Shakespeare’s use of it, was when I encountered it on the 19th cent unofficial tokens of Daniel Barrett {Fig.2}, issued between 1821 and 1837 {when he went bust}; nevertheless, I am grateful to be enlightened.



Barrett dealt in tea rather than wines and spirits, but probably the same principle lay behind his choice of phrase. Likewise, possibly, the issuers of many lead tokens of the common type, depicting bushes, which appear on the left? Although, from what my correspondent said above, maybe I have got the photograph the wrong way up!



## Picture Gallery

A batch of early 18th cent pieces to start, continuing Tony Williams and friends' contribution from last month. It is always pleasing to see a group which feel as if they might have shared their lives in the same piece of ground for the last 200 years.



Fig.1a shows a cross which is accompanied by annulets instead of pellets, which is a change; they occur frequently enough on some of the better-executed BNJ54 type Ms of the late 15th cent, but not very frequently on later, larger & cruder pieces. I like the rays round the edge as well; they are part of the evolution towards beaded rims. The annulets tempt one to think that it might be early, but the spiky bush and rays of Fig.1b, along with the diameter, say late 17th cent.

The crossed ladders of Fig.2 are just one form of a cross, at this date, early 18th cent, probably a design rather than of any ecclesiastical significance. The other side has a pleasant hint of the main series farthing token style about it, even if it isn't all that clear. Figs.3-5 are of similar period; one heart within another in Fig.3 is a trifle unusual, and one wonders whether there is any significance in the star above. Figs.4 and 5 are two of the fairly common pieces thought possibly to derive their type from the 1724 eclipse, when the visibility of stars in the sky at daytime made their once in a lifetime impression on unexpecting rural communities, although one could argue that the size and artistry of Fig.4 suggest a late 17c date. The tree on Fig.4 is very attractive, especially with issuers' initials flanking; it may possibly be intended as the Royal Oak, associated with the restoration of Charles II, and thus indicative of the issuer's political sympathies. It may also double up as his shop sign. Fig.5 similarly pairs with a tree on the reverse, more crudely executed, and too poor to show.



Fig.6 is a pleasant little woolcomb or line of candles; take your pick. The object on the other side is probably a letter L but may just be a tool, e.g. for passing a strand of wool through between those already there. Fig.7 could also be candles, albeit possibly the other way up; execution is not of the best, and it is probably well into the 18th cent, a theory which is also supported by its high exergual line, conveniently placed to double up as a support for the candles, or bananas {I jest} to hang from. Or, it could just be a degenerative lis.

Fig.8: That's a bloke on a chair, or a letter "h", keeled over forward because he has had too much to drink. For the record, the reverse is an unremarkable 2x2 grid, not worth showing. More worthy of our attention is Fig.9, issued by one John Hare in 1708. Named and dated pieces are always a bonus. I don't know what the design is although it looks like a three stemmed plant on a tray, not that I can imagine there was much market for luxuries like floristry in an era which, for most lead token users, must have been incredibly tough. Perhaps it is an elaborate floral crown, again used as a shop sign?



Some more now from the same source {for which many thanks}, albeit more varied in date and size. The first few are all magnified 3:2 for ease of viewing.



17th cent main series tokens are probably the most popular of all British tokens series and it is always good to see one in lead {Fig.10}. I pass on the opinion of its owner, on which I can do little to improve: The reverse depicts a shield of arms, most probably those of the Worshipful Company of Grocers: *a shield with a chevron between nine cloves*. It is very unusual for lead token inscriptions to carry the full name of the issuer but, although not fully legible, the first two lines of the obverse probably read IOHN GRAY. The third line, G H T possibly represents a three letter place name abbreviation or, in view of the reverse arms, G for grocer followed by a two letter one. I do not know its find spot, but one of Tony's group has conjectured that the issuer might be a John Gray who is known to have lived in Hythe, Kent, in 1657.

Fig.11 is more interesting for its style of manufacture than the design itself. I hate the effect of engraving using tiny dots as is occasionally done on copper love tokens, finding it unattractive and difficult to read; but when stippling, as it is called, is done using carved dashes like this, as is usually the case when attempted with lead, it is quite effective.

Fig.12 is a nicely formed uniface piece which I expect to be from around 1650-1680. Debatable, of course, whether Kent is a surname or a county, but I suspect the latter, in which case it neatly fits in as one of the seals recently discussed in LTT\_107,111. Fig.13 is probably a weight, one needs to bear in mind that cut copper coins tokens {klippe} were fashionable in Scandinavia from the late 16th cent to the mid 17th cent and, given that Bristol issued such pieces in the early 1590s, it is not impossible that this is another British token of similar period. The design was stamped on to a metal sheet which was then cut with shears.



Fig.14 is an intriguing hybrid; possibly a type 4 lis, but with curved tines giving it more than a hint of an agricultural implement. It could even be a defective shield .



To some later pieces now, which are lifesize where I know what lifesize is. I haven't a clue what to make of Fig.15. Late 18th cent; spurious hints of the Orient, possibly an attempt by someone illiterate at some pseudo-handwriting. Ideas welcome!

Fig.16, found near Worksop and at the side of the M1, is presumably a weight. rather than a token , but I have no size to confirm. The basic design is a double-headed eagle, but very cleverly worked to give the appearance of a bearded face.

Next is an unusual and very pleasant variant of pseudo-groat {Fig.17}, incorporating a five-petalled rose at its centre, found in the grounds of the now-demolished Wingerworth Hall near Chesterfield. Finally, Fig.18, found in Goole; a lead piece based on the Commonwealth silver twopence, but with some wording worked in as well.



## Crude Token Usage in a Community: Dundee

It is difficult, when pondering our near-anonymous lead tokens, to picture who exactly was using them. The first reaction is to imagine that they were probably traders down the lower end of the commercial hierarchy, but this little case history shows that that may well not necessarily be.



Figs.1-4 above are brass, it is true, but their equivalents of a few years earlier would almost certainly have been lead. All are uniface, and counterstruck. They came as a group and are clearly by the same maker, if a mere counterstamper of blanks deserves such an elevated title, and at a first guess probably date from the late 19th cent, maybe somewhere around 1870-80. Be prepared to modify that as we go along.....

OK, we have four names, but isn't that just about where our luck runs out? Just who are J.Keiller, A.Butchart, D.Rodger and W.Campbell, and do we have the slightest hope of finding out? Well, it isn't as bad as it looks. The names have a collectively Scottish look, two of them are relatively scarce, and one of those coincides with that of a still famous marmalade manufacturer who is known to come from Dundee. A bit of a browse on Ancestry for the geographic distribution of Keillers and Butcharts, whereupon Dundee becomes even more strongly implicated. Mr.Marmalade was a James Keiller; ours may or may not be the same one, but he was quite likely related.

Ambiguity of name prevented any firmer identification until two similar pieces {Figs.5-6 } turned up, one at least looking not far different and both having the advantage of an issuer's address. Neighbouring addresses, indeed, unless 170 and 171 Overgate were on opposite sides of the road! What was the chance of adjacent numbers like that?



The addresses provide the opportunity not only to investigate Messrs. McDonald and Adams but also to see if there were any of our other four issuers in the immediate vicinity. The results were quite interesting. First of all, from the 1872 Dundee directory:

⇒	Michael McDonald	Spirit Merchant	170 Overgate	
⇒	Alexander Butchart	Grocer & Spirit Merchant	57 Overgate	Res: 24 Crichton St
⇒	John Keiller	Grocer & Spirit Merchant	70 Ann St	Res: 68 Ann St
⇒	William Campbell	Flesher	162 Hawkhill	Res: 28 Watson Place
⇒	David Rodger	Wholesale Tea Merchant	5 Hawkhill Place & 28 Castle St	
	{of Rodger & Whyte}			

Now to the census and other records:

- ⇒ Michael McDonald b.c.1820 was an Irishman who had established a grocery business at 170 Overgate by 1861. The census of that year shows him living there, but in 1865 he was widowed. By 1871 he had remarried and was living with a second wife at another address elsewhere in the city, although from the above directory entry still trading from his old address, albeit as a spirit merchant rather than specifically a grocer. His business was still based at Overgate when he died early in 1879.

- ⇒ Thomas Adams, spirit merchant of Overgate, Dundee, went bust at the end of May 1868 {Edinburgh Gazette}.
- ⇒ Alexander Butchart was born in Dundee in 1844. The 1871 census shows him living at the above 24 Crichton St, which was clearly his parents' family home, with his widowed mother, his sister {who was a shopkeeper} and two other grocers; some people live above their shops, some of these folk obviously didn't. The Dundee Evening Telegraph of 24 July 1880 reported that "John Gillanders, grocer of 37 Overgate, has bought out Butchart's business at 57 Overgate and has effected a transfer of Mr. Butchart's licence". Butchart's business continued to thrive in the city, but at a different address.
- ⇒ John Keiller, aged 40, grocer & spirit merchant at 74 Church St, Dundee, in 1881, is probably the same person as in the 1872 directory above. An advert in the Dundee Courier of 3 January 1882 suggests that his business is in trouble, but he seems to survive bankruptcy at the cost of selling it.
- ⇒ David Rodger {c.1836-92} was already a grocer & spirit dealer in Dundee, employing a man and two boys, by 1861. He moved to the above Hawkhill Place address sometime before 1871, and references to his joint business of Rodger and Whyte appears frequently in the Dundee press from 1866, mainly in connection with notifications of imports in the shipping news. He appears in the familiar Gazette, not as a bankrupt, but elected as a commissioner to investigate other bankruptcies.

All of which points to some quite interesting numismatic conclusions:

- ⇒ From the various earliest and latest dates implied, most of the pieces were made in the late 1860s or 1870s.
- ⇒ Despite the fact that the specifically commissioned "19th cent unofficial" was the normal commercial token of the period, quite a number of merchants were happy to abstain during these decades and to issue a simpler type of piece more associated with an earlier age.
- ⇒ Most if not all of the issuers had their own shops, not mere market stalls, and some of their businesses sound passably prosperous.

From which it may be conjectured that maybe many of our earlier lead tokens, even the very basic ones, may also emanate from the shops of the High Street and not exclusively the market stall.



POSTSCRIPT: Dundee traders also issued a number of ordinary "unofficial" brass tokens in the late 19th cent, of which several are shown above. One of them, Fig.9 comes from Overgate, several times mentioned above. Fig.7 is mid-19th cent, Fig.8 c.1880-1900, and the other two maybe c.1900 or early 20th cent. There were also a number of earlier pieces, dating back to the end of the 18th cent, of which Fig.11-12 are examples. Figs.7-11 all relate to specific issuers but the earliest, Fig.12, is communal. It would appear that the simple counterstamps of Figs.1-6 all relate to a short period in the middle.