

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 Please note that the old david@powell8041.freeserve.co.uk address advertised on earlier versions of LTT will not be active after 31 May 2017.

A Trail of Connected Themes

It is always a pleasure to come across, within some short space of time, a number of tokens whose common features of style or subject matter support some particular theme of interest, or which suddenly add meaning to a piece which you have had for a long time by making it feel part of a family, rather than just an isolated piece of history. There is a variation on this, however; a chain of pieces which each connect one to the next, but whose ends do not relate. It is a bit like those word puzzles where one has to change one 4 or 5 letter word to another by just changing one letter at a time, whilst ensuring that all the intermediate combinations are also meaningful words in the English language.



Figs.1-5 are an example. All look to be late 17th cent or early 18th, and the crossed heart piece of Fig.1 even has an attempt at a date which hints as much. It isn't that readable, but I think it is meant to be 1690-something, and even if not that successful in conveying its meaning it is a worthy attempt to create a mid-17th cent Williamson style reverse in lead.



Fig.2 continues the pierced-heart theme, and the beaded edge on each side suggests that the memory of main series copper tokens might still not be too far away, but this time we have a bird replacing the issuers initials. He is a little static, perched on his branch, and not the most attractive bird you have ever seen, but never mind. He looks better than a dull pair of initials, even if one wonders why the issuer chose to omit his in this case.

Figs. 3-4 are a delight; birds again, but this time active and elegant, enjoying their freedom. On the other side, in each case, a head, always a pleasure to see. First reaction is, if we aren't told who the issuer is, maybe at least we have a hint of what he looked like. Wait, though; is Fig.3 Queen Anne? in which case the Caesar-like figure of Fig.4 may also be a monarch. On reflection, it bears quite a passing likeness to Charles II {compare the portrait on his silver coinage}, a ruler whose features we do not see much of on lead. The 18th cent monarchs are all copied from time to time {e.g. Fig.5}, but not usually those who reigned this early.



Finally Fig.6, the only uniface piece in our sequence. Game birds this time, and just strutting rather than flying, but well-drawn nevertheless; they probably aren't by the same engraver as Figs.3-4, but the style is such that one feels they could be. The piece is almost certainly a gentry issue, associated with the administration of shooting parties.



A Book on the Boy Bishop Traditions

Many of us have heard of the Boy Bishop tradition and its accompanying tokens, but our knowledge is often all too hazy. I am pleased, therefore, to have been able to track down a recent paperback which explains much of it, namely: “The Mediaeval Boy Bishops” by Neil MacKenzie.

It is not LTT’s place to go into the fine detail of the tradition and I am therefore going to recommend you to the book itself rather than attempt to précis its 160 pages or so of main text; however, the following points are worth noting specifically:

- ⇒ The tradition was practised much more widely across both Britain and the nearer continent than the usual numismatic preoccupation with Bury St.Edmonds and Ely suggests; likewise, it probably goes back several centuries further than the well-known tokens dated by BNJ54 to about 1485 or later.
- ⇒ The precise details of how the celebrations were conducted varied greatly from one place to another according to local attitude, tradition and level of financial backing.

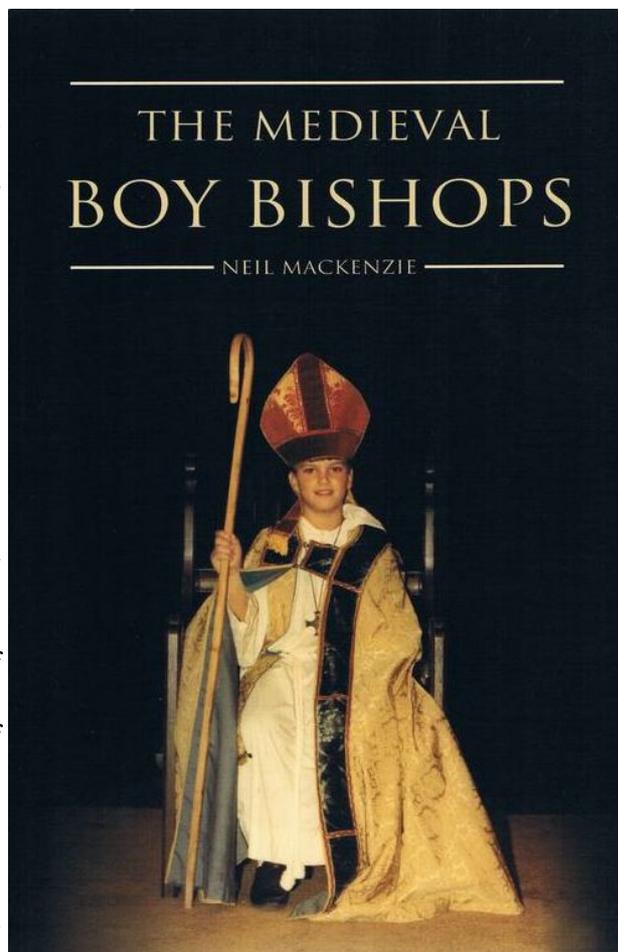
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The Boy Bishop token coinage of East Anglia more closely approximates to regal money than any other lead issue, particularly in the early days c.1485-1500 when it was at its finest, and our main purpose, of course, is to ascertain just what role it fulfilled. Was it ceremonial money only, or was it used in lieu of real money and subsequently exchanged like, for example, pickers’ checks?

I have not yet found any direct references to tokens in MacKenzie’s book, but chapter 5, nominally titled “Feasting and Visiting”, is largely devoted to the financing of the exercise. Some detailed accounts for the celebrations of the 1396 York Boy Bishop survive, and may be taken as a guide to what happened, or might have happened, elsewhere. They were written by the Boy Bishop’s guardian, who in practice probably always kept quite a tight control over any money:

“The cathedral chapter might take inordinate care to ensure that the Boy Bishop had an unforgettable reign, but he was not allowed to fall prey to boyish extravagance or be given the chance to lose the money. With long experience of caring for boys, they had adopted the attitude of benevolent control.”

Perhaps the use of token coinage, rather than real money, was part of that control; having said which, we have no firm evidence for it having been deployed generally, beyond the area of East Anglia for which it is known. Not to say that it wasn’t, of course; maybe some of the other known ecclesiastical lead and



pewter tokens fulfilled the same role without us realising it. However, it is very possible that the use of tokens was local only to certain cathedrals' traditions.



Back to York and 1396, it would seem that the city and cathedral, and their various officers and patrons, gave some three quid odd to the Boy Bishop's fund, to which was added another five and a half from the various big houses, both secular and ecclesiastic, which he and his entourage visited during the course of his reign. This was equivalent to a large portion of a professional man's annual salary at the time, and so was not to be sneezed at; certainly, no mean sum to be entrusting to a small boy, even if he was required to pay all his expenses out of it. Which is why, no doubt, a guardian was a must.

So, what were those expenses? For a start, there was the Great Feast, part of the initial ceremony following the Boy Bishop's appointment, and to which no doubt many hangers-on took pains to get themselves invited. That cost 15/-. Then, once you were on the road, visiting all the great houses, there were a variety of things to consider. Two to three hundred miles of travel in medieval times, in the height of winter, with a large retinue, generated plenty of demand for warm clothing, fuel, lighting, and horse-drawn transport; not to mention food and drink en route, repairs and maintenance, and the dangers of the road in an age which was much more rough and rudimentary than ours.

Beyond that, all sorts of people had to be paid. Some of these were civilians, like cooks and ostlers, but there were a variety of clerics as well; not only officiating ministers and attendants, but also musicians, and the various clerics who looked after the church silverware and vestments. One entry is interesting: "Common Pence, 1s 6d". MacKenzie suggests that this might be for the choristers. Silver pence, or lead?



One might fear for the poor Boy Bishop that he could go bust; but apparently no, he came out at just over a couple of quid profit and was allowed to keep it. A fair reward perhaps for being the centrepiece of an attempt to inject some lightheartedness and festivity into the depths of an otherwise bleak mediaeval winter, even if he had to suffer plenty of people jumping on his bandwagon. His return to normality from the heady heights of bishophood may just have been alleviated a little if, at the close of his reign, two pounds face value of lead were exchanged for an equivalent in silver coin of the realm.

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It seems appropriate after the above to fill the remainder of the page with ecclesiastical pieces of the same period, so to start with Fig.8, at 8.26gm and 25-27mm a slightly overweight variant on a Boy Bishop groat. It would look to have been intended as a badge, probably a security pass for someone involved in the ceremony, although one would have liked to think that, for such a usage, the organiser would have had the piece holed above the crown rather than below it. I incline to think that the inscription is non-sensical, although I am not fully certain; if it did have meaning, it would hopefully contain the name of either bishop or town.

Obviously connected with bishops but not necessarily with juvenile ones are the occasional penny-sized pieces with two initials flanking a crozier. Different combinations of initials occur and it would be interesting to know both what geographical area they are associated with and what their precise function was. Any suggestions, please mail in.



A Token in the Style of the Previous Generation

The piece on the right {magnified} is simple enough; the four numerals of its date in the form of a neat square on one side, and the issuer's initials, SS, in similar style on the other. There is a well-known group of such lead pieces, dated approx 1647-1664, as discussed in BNJ54 pages 124/5, with one being illustrated on page 162; by lead standards, they are of quite high quality, as indeed is this one. Even the pellet arrangement of this piece conforms to the norm; as does everything about it....except that the date, beautifully clear, is 1683. It was found near Chelmsford by Nick Greenland, to whom thanks for sharing it with us.



Generally, 15mm diameter tokens, which this one is, stop about 1665. There was a period during the early 1660s when the populace were hoping that Charles II, on his return to the throne, was going to do something significant about the dearth of small change which had prevailed during the Commonwealth, and for a short while there was a slight lessening of new token issues in hope. By the mid-1660s, however, it was obvious that this was not going to be, and that Charles was going to continue dragging his heels. The response to this was an outburst of copper and brass token issues even more virulent than before, for about four or five years, until fresh rumours about regal copper again caused a reduction of new token issues around 1670. As we now know, regal halfpennies and farthings did not eventually emerge, in mid-1672, putting a fairly quick stop to the main {Williamson} series of copper and brass.

Lead continued to be issued, however, by those who believed that the supply of new copper was inadequate, or did not circulate fast enough, or who did not trust the Government to keep the supply going. Lead token usage may have been made officially illegal again in 1672, as it was for many years before 1648, but it was like the illegal electronic copying of music today; large sections of the public did it and the Government, whilst muttering under their breath, blinked at it.

The effect of all this on the token coinage was that around 1665-66:

- ⇒ The run of high-quality lead farthings which had been produced almost continuously since about 1539 came to an end, mostly, as manufacturers and clients chose in large numbers to swap over to main series copper and brass.
- ⇒ Some of the better lead manufactories may have closed down in consequence, and were not there when there was a call to resume in 1672.
- ⇒ Whereas the farthing had previously been the favoured denomination for main series 17th cent tokens, the preference for personal issues suddenly switched heavily in favour of the halfpenny, which tended to be struck on 19-21mm flans rather than 13-15mm.

Municipal issues in the main series were usually farthings, both before and after 1666, but most of them, even the earlier ones, were around 19-21mm anyway.

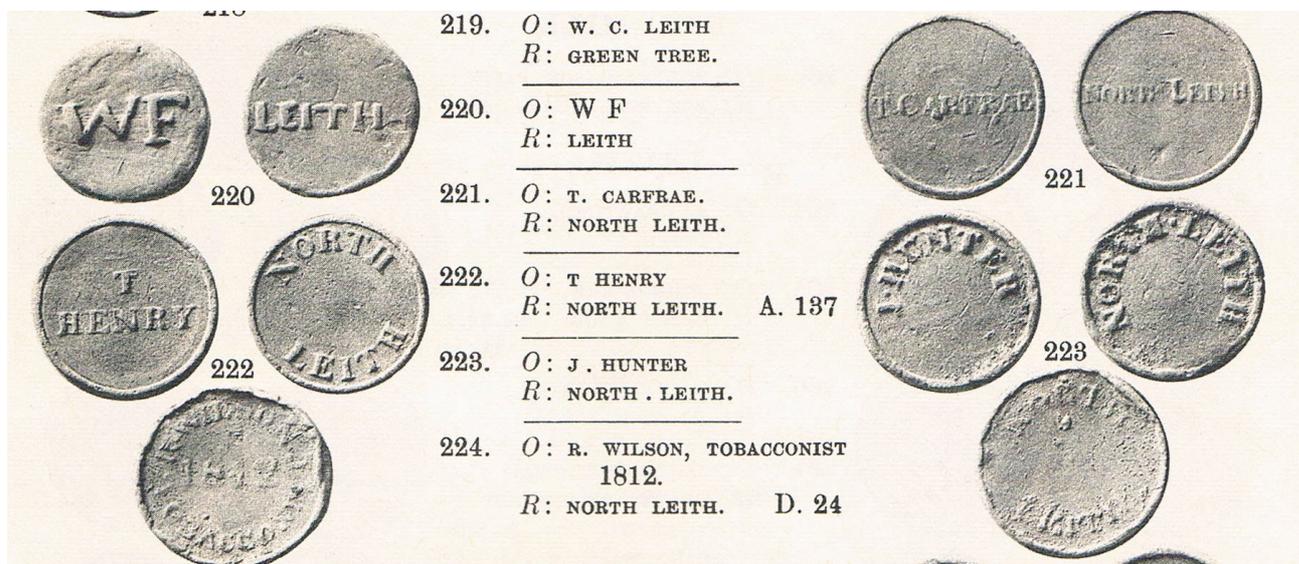
Subsequent lead tended to conform to these new sizes as well, but this 1683 piece is clearly a hearken-back to the earlier tradition and style, which I find most interesting. When someone new wanted to design a token, I guess that he often worked off what he could remember making or seeing before, and that that memory sometimes went back a long way, perhaps even to his childhood. Maybe he had a token put away, which he could no longer spend; maybe, like detectorists today, he had chanced to dig one up. Alternatively, perhaps the maker was also the manufacturer of the earlier pieces, or one of his employees. The occasional leaping of decades or even centuries is one of the fascinations of local token design.

POSTSCRIPT: Had the piece been uniface, I would have suspected it of being a pass, allowing access to, or membership of, something for the duration of the year 1683. However, passes are usually thought of {rightly or wrongly!} as being more associated with the 18th and later centuries, and are usually bigger.

The Issuers of the Lead Tokens of Edinburgh, Part 4

Continuing with our exploration of Dalton & Hamer's lead token issuers, we move this month into Edinburgh's leafy, or should I say Leithy, suburbs; although given that Leith occupied the small area between its city neighbour and the latter's shipping facilities, I doubt that there was too much open space around even in 1800.

		ESK MILL.	
203		203. O: WIL ^M JACKSON PAPIN. R: ESK MILL 1812. D. 17	203
		LEITH.	
204		204. O: R. CRAWFORD. R: LEITH.	
			
		205. O: JOHN EGGO. R: LEITH 1806. SM.HP.S. D. 18	205
			
206		206. O: H. EVANS LEITH. R: Anchor.	
			
		207. O: JAMES FERGUSON. R: STONE WAREHOUSE LEITH. A. 136	207
			
208		208. O: G. FYFE. R: LEITH.	
			
		209. O: GEO: LILLIE. R: LEITH.	209
			
		210. O: MARR, MEAL & BARLEY WAREHOUSE. R: COAL HILL, LEITH.	
			
210		211. O: ALEX ^R MILLAR 39 ST. ANDREWS STREET LEITH. R: TEAS SPIRITS & GROCERIES. A. 138	211
			
212		212. O: W ^M MILLER SENIOR. R: LEITH 1806. D. 22 A. 140	212
			
		213. O: W ^M MILLER .1806. R: LEITH FARTHING. D. 21 A. 139	213
			
214		214. O: ALEX ^R POLLOCK. R: LEITH.	
			
		215. O: JA ^S POLLOCK. R: LEITH 1806. D. 23	215
		LEITH.	
216		216. O: SCOTT & FULTON. LEITH R: MEAL, BARLEY & FLOUR WARE HOUSE	216
			
		217. O: G. TURNER. R: LEITH.	217
			
218		218. O: JA ^S WOOD. R: ONE FARTHING.	218
			
		219. O: W. C. LEITH. R: LEITH.	219



Unlike Edinburgh, very few of the Leith tokens have a full address on them, which means that when an issuer moved from one premises to another we cannot tell whether he used the token at one or both. The list below therefore gives possible addresses within the geographical restraints, if any, supplied by the token.

<u>D+H</u>			<u>Nature of trade</u>	<u>Token Address</u>	<u>Earliest</u>	<u>Latest</u>
203	William	Jackson	Paper maker		
204	Robert	Crawford	Grocer	Horse Wynd, later 74, St.Giles St	1808/09	1819/20
205	John	Eggo	Grocer	Queen St, later Kirkgate	1804/05	1822/23
206	Hugh	Evans	Grocer	76, The Shore	1809/10	1818/19
207	James	Ferguson	Rag warehouse {1809}, later grocer {1818}	39, St.Andrews Street	1809/10	1818/19+
208	George	Fyfe	Coppersmith	Queen St.	1804/05	1807/08
209	George	Lillie	Tobacconist	The Shore	1810/11	1815/16
210	James	Marr	Meal dealer	6, Coal Hill	1811/12	1824/25
211	Alexander	Millar	Grocer	39, St.Andrews Street	1810/11	1815/16+
212	William	Miller	Grocer	Green Tree	1806/07	1815/16+
213	William	Miller	Grocer	{various}	1806/07	1815/16+
214	Alexander	Pollock	Meal dealer	76, St.Andrews St	1810/11	1815/16+
215	James	Pollock	Grocer & meal dealer	47, St.Giles St	1804/05	1815/16+
216	Henry, Francis or John	Scott and Fulton	Meal dealer	1, End of Old Bridge	1814/15-	1817/18
217	George ?	Turner	Tea & spirit dealer ?	72, St.Giles St.	1804/05	1815/16+
218	James	Wood	Grocer	67, The Shore	1811/12	1815/16+
219	William	Christie	Grocer	Green Tree	1807/08	1814/15
220	William	France or Forbes	Grocer & spirit dealer {France}, grocer {Forbes}	St.Andrew St.{Fra}; 9, Broad Wynd {For}	1804/05 1812/13	1812/13 1815/16+
221	Thomas	Carfrae	Grocer	Drawbridge, North Leith	1804/05	1812/13
222	Thomas	Henry	Grocer	North Leith	1812/13	1815/16
223	John	Hunter	Grocer	North Leith	1807/08	1818/19
224	Robert ?	Wilson	Tobacconist	North Leith	1811/12	1812/13