

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Please note that the old david@powell18041.freeserve.co.uk address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

Same Time, Same Place

Rarely in the lead token world does one have the opportunity to say with fair certainty that two pieces, not knowingly found near each other, are the work of the same manufacturer; however, in the case of those shown on the right {Figs.1-2}, there is not much doubt. The common factor is the rather cluttered obverse showing what I had originally presumed to be a nautical theme, with what I had assumed to be a high-sided warship with central mast and two flags or sails aloft; however, read on! Both obverses have an exergue below, with date; in one case 1708, in the other 1709.



I was just in the middle of writing this article when, through my mailbox, pops a very timely contribution from reader Tom McCall in the form of Figs.3-4, a pair of identical pieces bearing the same obverse features and dated 1710. They were found in the same field in the Hitchin area of northern Hertfordshire, and also, more tellingly, within 200-300 metres of a known windmill site. Tom suggests that, instead of ship's flags, we are looking at windmill sails, and given his findspot information. I am more than happy to go along with that. Fig.1 is known to be a Cambridgeshire piece, although from which part of the county is uncertain.



Tom made the further suggestion that the John Hare piece from LTT_117 {bottom of page 2, reproduced here as Fig.5} was also by the same manufacturer, which I must admit that I had not picked, and this again I agree with. It has a little less brickwork, just a couple of lines, but again the same annulets on poles, the same dated exergue; this time, 1708. The reverse has a similar style to that of Fig.1, which until this piece did not seem to match the rest. Fig.2's English rose, surrounded by as many pellets as can be crammed in, is much more in keeping with the obverses. Which begs the question: are we looking at the output of a single engraver who felt like a change when he worked the first reverse, or at the produce of a workshop employing several men who muled their work with that of their colleagues?



The reverses of Tom's two Hertfordshire pieces are one of those designs which, when encountered on an undated piece, make one wonder whether it is 15th cent or 18th. If it is large, 20-odd millimetres like Figs.1-5, then there is little doubt, but if it is small, like the 17mm Fig.6, which has an uninspiring grid reverse? Opinions invited as to whether it comes from the same stable. My thanks to Tom, and any further observations of this manufacturer's pieces, please let me know!



Robert Davies, G.....: Another identification Solved

OK, this piece is copper, not lead, but it has several of the qualities which make it feel more at home here amongst the riff-raff of numismatic society than in with the better-formed pieces of the series of which it clearly forms a part; namely, 18th and 19th cent copper Scottish farthing tokens.



If you are looking at the reverse, peering vainly through the murk to find out whether there is anything on it... well, no, there isn't. Not obviously, anyway, although it might conceivably be an over-strike. Nor is the obverse that much better; the top two-thirds of the familiar design is visible, but below that it fades into oblivion. It was probably thrown out by its maker at birth, like a few of the leads shown in these pages, and spent most of its early life on a manufacturer's spoil heap.

Well, let us make of it what we can. "R.DAVIES" around the top, "PAISLEY" across the middle, and some word beginning with "G" at the bottom. As far as clues go, that's your lot.

I backed the conjecture that "G" might stand for "Grocer" and went looking for Mr. Davies in the directories. The likely date was too early for most towns other than the very largest to have directories, but, for some unknown reason, Fowler's Paisley commercial directory of 1841-1842, available at the online directories site, conveniently had a list of Paisley merchants in 1783 at the back. It included the excerpt shown on the right:

174	MERCHANTS OF PAISLEY IN 1783.
	Davis, Robert, grocer, High street
	Denniston, Robert, bleacher, Snedon
	Dick, Robert, manufacturer, Causeyside
	Dick, Robert, heddle-twine maker, Maxwellton
	Dowie, David, grocer and seedsman, High street
	Dun, Andrew, merchant, High street
	Dun, Mrs, vintner, Bridge-end
	Dun, Alexander, glover, Bridge-end

The Scotland's Places website, as opposed to the better known Scotland's People, then produced several such references as the following, all spelt "Davies":

- ⇒ E326/4/7/56: Shop Tax Rolls, 1785-89 record Robert's shop as being worth £9, on which he had to pay tax of 4d in the £, total 3s. {probable date 1788}
- ⇒ E326/6/2/94: Female servant tax rolls, 1785-86, record that Robert had to pay 3s9d each in respect of Isobel Sharp and Peggie Neil, total 7s6d
- ⇒ E326/6/6/122: Female servant tax rolls, 1786-87, record that Robert had to pay 2s6d in respect of Eliza Angus.

Amongst the possibly relevant genealogical entries on Scotland's People is a marriage of Robert Davies to Elizabeth Angus at Paisley Low Church on 4.11.1786. One wonders whether she was the same Eliza Angus whom he paid servant tax on in the entry above!

FEMALE SERVANTS TAX.									
Masters and Mistresses Names and Designations.	Female Servants Names.	Actual Number of servants.	Bachelors Servants,			One Servant 2s. 6d.	Two ditto, 3s. each.	Three or more, 10s. each.	Duty.
			2s. 6d.	5s.	10s.				
<i>Paisley Continued</i>		<i>47</i>	<i>4</i>			<i>32</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>8 10</i>
<i>Robert Davies Grocer</i>	<i>Eliza Angus</i>	<i>1</i>				<i>1</i>			<i>2 6</i>

POSTSCRIPT: It is evident that certain of the early Scottish copper farthing tokens existed both alongside and before many of the lead ones recently discussed in LTT_125-129, and indeed Dalton and Hamer's book bears this out; it quotes a number of other copper pieces with dates c.1780 or thereabouts, whilst at the same time speaking of an antiquarian, Dr. Thompson, who was scouring the shops of Edinburgh for their lead at almost exactly the same time. As we have seen, the lead issues went on until about 1815. This all points to the same having occurred in Dalton & Hamer's Scotland as occurred in Williamson's 17th cent England; namely, that lead and copper tokens were coined concurrently, and that the user had some choice over which option he went for. Given that the style of the better lead is akin to that of the copper, pieces made of the two metals probably also emanated some of the time from the same manufacturer; in which case, cost was probably the deciding factor.

Shown on the right {magnified 3:2} is a good example of a Southwark 17th cent token, 15mm diameter and manufactured in lead, which manages to accommodate the same level of detail as a main series 17th cent token in copper or brass. Issued by Richard Smith of Horsleydown, Southwark {Everson 646}, it is not in Williamson, although another probable piece by the same issuer is {S'wark.254, Everson 652}. It is almost certainly post-1648, and it is very feasible that one day a copper or brass specimen may turn up struck from the same die.



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Readers' Correspondence

My thanks to Carl Jones for Figs.1-2, both 13-14mm early 17th cent pieces found about three miles east of Bath. It is good to know that this series of pieces are found that far west, as I have friends in Gloucestershire who sometimes complain of the local lead being rather poor and uninteresting. I have nearly a full half of North Somerset ancestry, so anything from down that way interests me; any more observations from the area will be most welcome. Both the current pieces are obviously trade-related, with Fig.2 being a shop sign {the issuer's premises being probably "The Sun" rather than "The Star"} and Fig.1 either a rake, comb, baling fork or row of candles.



Which, tool or candles, determines the issuer's profession. If there were no handle, I would definitely go for the candles, which are formed by dipping a line of potential wicks in wax and then hanging them up and leaving them to dry. The candles are probably the commoner token subject matter, but very often the suspender at the top is not shown on the token. I am slightly inclined to go for the comb in this case, as the handle looks fairly definite; in which case the issuer is a clothier or the like, the comb being used for teasing.

Conveniently hot on the heels of last month's front-page article on late 18th cent equestrian tokens is Fig.3, kindly sent in by Hayley Ferme on behalf of a detectorist friend who found it at Wolverley, near Kidderminster. It is a little out of focus, but nevertheless passable enough to produce for comparison; weight 6.2gm. Diameter 23mm, and about 3mm thick. The difference here is that the mounted officer appears to be waving a curved sword, a representation which appears to be very



similar to that used on two 19th cent unofficial tokens issued by agents of the East India Company trying to recruit for their Horse Artillery. The pieces concerned feature in Paul and Bente Withers' "Token Book 2", numbers 2140 and 2500 {Fig.4}, and look as if they date from around 1835-50. Hayley's lead token is hardly that late, but its similarity is such that I feel it is very likely a precursor, by the same issuer and for the same purpose.

A Newcastle Fantasy

The piece on the right looks strange. It is lead, but on the obverse at least in the style of a very early 19th cent unofficial farthing, and at 24mm diameter slightly larger than the usual 22-23mm. The inscription is “John Bell, Bookseller, Quay”, surrounding the arms of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and indeed the directories of that town record that there was a man of the right name and trade with a shop at that address.



The reverse shows said shop, with its owner's name above the door; the ground conveniently forming an exergual line, and the date 1813 below, scrawled rather more crudely than any other part of the design, is consistent with both the Newcastle directories and the style of the piece. The condition is good enough, because it has seen little or no circulation, but the quality of striking leaves something to be desired.

It is generally thought that Bell's pieces, and those of local draper Robert Oliver similarly, are fantasies, commissioned by antiquarian issuers either for their own amusement or for selling to customers. They may possibly be considered as advertising pieces, but nothing more.

....and from Blackpool & Scarborough as well

A man wearing 18th cent dress on one side; a shape and reverse inscription reminiscent of a 19th cent white metal communion token, if the lettering wasn't in Indian script. Perhaps grey metal rather than white metal; the lead content looks high. Colonial? I am told that the best findspot for these is on Blackpool beach, so probably not. More, I would imagine, a ticket for one of the local entertainments. The size is 31x39mm.



I don't know the date, but I will guess around the 1950s or 1960s, almost exactly about the same time that the commonly seen brass & steel “doublon” tokens were in use, see below. Do not be deceived by the date 1751; they were for use on the boating lake at Scarborough. I will conjecture that the brass variant is slightly the older of the two.



There are, of course, many tokens to do with entertainment of various types both in the 19th century and the 20th. Most of them are exactly what they look, pieces of their times, but a few try to evoke mystery by trying to pretend, albeit half-heartedly, that they come from a former age. If anyone finds any further examples in lead, please let us know.