

*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[david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk) address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.*

## Picture Gallery

Some nice robust pieces this month, mainly but not exclusively from the 18th cent. Fig.1's engraver was clearly bolder and more innovative in his choice of design than most; few rustics would have chosen such a font in those days, or even cared to think about it. His reverse design is tasteful, too; one cannot but suspect that his off-centre cartwheel was deliberate. It looks all the better for being so.



Fig.2 is the one early piece in the selection. In one sense it has Boy Bishop written all over it, but it is enigmatic; it may have that goat-type look about it, but it differs in several respects. Whilst having the diameter of a groat:

- ⇒ There is no bishop on either side; instead, he is replaced on the obverse {Fig.2a} by a second cross with some rather vague ornamentation in the angles.
- ⇒ There is only one outer ring, not two, and what that ring contains is only a partial inscription; much of the outer ring on the reverse, and probably the obverse as well, appears to be blank.

If anyone can read the inscription, please let us know. Like those on many lead pieces it may not have a meaning, but just be there for effect.



The wildlife on so many 18th cent pieces is pleasing to observe, especially on the larger pieces. Some of them are pub checks for establishments with the name of the animal or bird that they depict, but others are possibly for the purchase of the relevant meat at market, or in the case of birds, for their eggs. Others too will be for vermin control, to be used in the same manner as the farmers often employed for paying their crop pickers. The six pellets on the back of Fig.5 are interesting; they may just be designers' doodles, or they may represent a value.

Continuing our would-be bird theme with Figs.6-7....are they or aren't they? Fig.6 looks rather comical; a penguin sat on his haunches, maybe, not the sort of thing you would find in rural England. He is probably something



else entirely. Fig.7 might well be intended as a turkey, but equally at the bottom there is a hint of the three-legged cooking pot which appears on a number of other tokens from the 15th cent onwards.

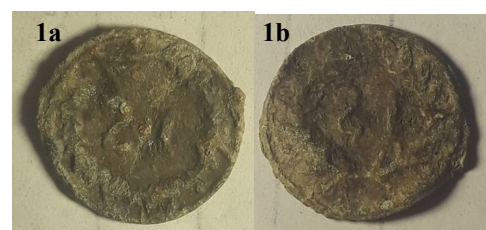
To human animals now {Fig.8}, and whilst the childlike depiction of the man is not very realistic there is a certain cheerful humour and vibrancy about him. There are probably a pair of initials flanking, although the one on the left, representing the forename, looks uncertain. The one on the right for his surname is almost certainly a P, although with a rather faint upper upright one feels that a question mark would be just as appropriate!



Fig.9 is a continuation of a theme found many times on the main series copper and brass tokens of the 17th cent; a knot, with the initials of the issuer flanking. Usually the knot occupies much of the token, but here what we have is a heart above a small knot, so placed that the two together merge to give the impression of one large knot. A very clever variation on the theme, and pleasing to find. This is not the only main series design concept to be reused {see Fig.10}. The pieces from the earlier era were plentiful, at least in certain areas, and would both lurk in the folk memory, and be found in ground and cottages, for many years thereafter.

## *A Roman Lead Find, & Wreaths on Tokens*

My thanks to an Italian correspondent, Paolo from Campobasso, for sending in Fig.1, a Roman find from, he estimates, about the 1st cent AD. It is 19mm in real life but, it not being very photogenic, I have magnified it 3:2 so that you have a better chance of appreciating it.



Both sides are the same, initials IS {S retrograde} within a wreath; you know to read SI rather than IS from the fact that the open bit of the wreath is always at the top, an advantage not always available to the interpreters of ambiguous British lead token initials.



The wreath has been used since ancient times and is probably the world's most timeless coin and token design. Used on both with great frequency, it appears extensively both in Roman times and in post-mediaeval Europe., and is a practical and ornamental way of expressing the address, initials, motto, value or whatever. On British coins, many of the shillings and sixpences of Victoria and Edward VII used the wreath right up until 1910.

Most British tokens depicting the wreath are 19th cent, but there are just a handful in the 17th cent main series. For some reason not many appear on our crude lead, other than in the Cromwellian period; Figs.2-4 are examples. If lead had endured further into the 19th cent, and not succumbed to brass as the metal of choice for personal tokens, we might have seen many more.

## Continental Counterparts, part 4: Truck Shops

Mines, factories, mills and other large employers, usually of an industrial nature, sometimes issued their own coinage with which to pay their employees, either wholly or partly. This was known as the truck system, and was not infrequently regarded as iniquitous, with good reason, because some employers {not all} took advantage and charged prices in the company shops which were significantly above the average elsewhere. Giving credit and keeping a paper account of expenditure was another way of doing it, and frequently used, but some employers preferred the token. We have already discussed British pieces in LTT\_116.

There are continental examples as well, although as in Britain they are spasmodic. Before we dismiss all company tokens as truck tokens, however, it should be said in defence that not all company tokens are necessarily issued with the intention of increasing the company's profits, and that in some cases the remoteness of the site {e.g. mines up in the mountains} may be such that the company is obliged to provide facilities for essential things like banking and domestic shopping, with which it would not normally be involved, because if they didn't, nobody else would. This was the case with wahrzeichengeld {Fig.1}, which circulated in one mountainous region near Salzburg from c.1600 until 1734, and were regarded as a local coinage of mutual convenience. They were finally abandoned because of abuse, but they lasted for well over a century.



The format of the Salzburg wahrzeichen is fairly standard, the design on both sides being the same: monogram of the Prince-Bishop of Salzburg at the top, above a Roman numeral indicating the value in kreuzer, flanked by two digits of a date each side, and either a cow or a bunch of grapes below. I understand that those with cows on are for food and those with grapes on for drinks.



Other issues have a more typical truck token look. Philippe Fontenilliat was a French trader and manufacturer who, c.1800, established a large cotton mill in the Vast, in Normandy; he issued 5 and 10 centimes pieces, Fig.2 being one of the former. Johann Gotthelf Greiner was a German glassmaker, widely acknowledged as the co-inventor of porcelain, which he commenced manufacturing at the two places named on his tokens, Limbach and Breitenbach, in the mid-late 18th cent. His pieces, valued at 3,4 and 6 pfennigs {Figs.3-5} are dated 1788; strangely, the middle value {Fig.4} is the largest. Maybe that is because it depicts his factory, which takes up more room than the clover shown, for some reason unfathomed, on the others.

Tokens associated with mines, whether associated with its workings or its truck shop, can often be identified by the presence of tools, usually a crossed pair, associated with the industry. We saw some French examples on page 3 of the last LTT, relating to the mines themselves, and Figs 6-7 here show some shop tickets, dated 1839, from the German mines of Sachsen-Ilmenau. Truck tickets extend well into the late 19th cent in Britain, so it is no surprise that Europe does likewise. An even later set of tickets from the Etablissement Alimentaire {food shop} of the French mines and railways of Épinac, in the Bourgogne, defines itself in terms of items rather than monetary values:



- ⇒ (1) Pain = bread                      (2) Viande = meat
- ⇒ (3) Soupe = soup                      (4) Boisson = drink

Truck tokens are generally considered to be a phenomenon introduced by the Industrial Revolution and therefore rather at the end of the lead token era; plus, it was very natural that such tokens were issued in the metals whose wider use the said Revolution ushered in. However, the earlier use of British truck tokens in lead should not be wholly discounted, as also possible co-operative issues along the lines of the wahrzeichen. They aren't known or proven, but it is certainly very feasible that they exist amidst the mass of British lead anonymity.

We move on next time to the brewing industry.

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## *Concentric Circles on White Metal Pieces*

When the use of lead and pewter tokens largely ceased in the early-mid 19th cent, those series which had previously been using them in abundance, such as hop and communion tokens {CTs}, swapped over to white metal. This like pewter is an alloy, but the definition of its possible contents is somewhat broader, nevertheless it is still a soft metal, and often lead remains one of its constituents. Its commencement seems to coincide with the establishment of certain manufacturing companies in the post-Industrial Revolution period, such as Kirkwood at Edinburgh and Crawford and Cunninghame at Glasgow in the case of CTs.



CTs were of a wide variety of shapes, but down in the hop country of Kent and Sussex most pieces were round. If one examines some of them, one often sees, especially on the larger pieces, evidence of very faint concentric lines caused in some way by the manufacture. They are often most noticeable around the lettering, and serve as a most useful guide for lining the latter up neatly, but in Fig.3, the most marked example, they are evident across the whole face of the piece.

What, exactly, is going on here? The indication is that during manufacture the piece is sitting on a surface which is being rotated around a central spindle, and that something is being applied to its upper side which is causing the slight marks. Whatever it is, it is not something which is essential to the manufacture of white metal pieces, because there are plenty which do not show the phenomenon. Maybe it just derives from the technique of certain makers.

The same sort of idea shows on Fig.5, an early brass London market piece of {probably} the 1860s, although here the lines only apply to the lettering. It is an engraved piece, so possibly the lines were hand drawn rather than done by machine. Every now and again pieces are encountered which



use strong concentric circles as part of the design, such as Figs.6-7; maybe they employ some similar techniques. Plockton, however, is a highly remote Scottish parish in Wester Ross, and its CT, by white metal standards, decidedly crude. One can't imagine that its officials sent too far to get their token made.