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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address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery



Mainly an 18th cent selection this month, although one or two may push the boundaries. Fig.1 is definitely from around 1750, when engravers were playing with sophisticating the stock designs and deterioration had not yet set in. This one is based on a lis, type 4 in our classification system, although there is more of a hint of a jester waving his hands around, as he waddles along on flipper-like feet, penguin-style, and maybe carrying something. The upright dash and two pellets which pass for nose and eyes could alternatively be a cross, suggesting a sudden jump from the secular to the ecclesiastic; or even royal, if you look further to the elements above his head and contemplate whether they might be a crown. Being over-imaginative, one might say; yet it is surprising how many pieces have artwork which conveys this sort of ambiguity.

The somewhat earlier Fig.2 is altogether cruder, and no doubt intended to be a sun, the shop-sign of its issuer's premises; yet even there a person, maybe the publican of the Sun, can be imagined; standing, head at the top and with protruding belly, flapping his waistcoat or wings at would-be customers to welcome them in. Fig.3 is fairly unremarkable, at first glance, yet it is an interesting combination; one feels that one of the common standard stock types was intended, but that the designer could not quite settle on which. It has a hint of both cartwheel and petal about it, with the end-result looking vaguely like an insect flapping its wings.

After that it is perhaps a relief to come to a couple of fairly obvious depictions. The damaged Fig.4 is enigmatic; the presumed owl head on the reverse looks too modern, too cleanly cut to be of any age, and yet on the obverse is a crown and crossed sceptres {or arrows?}, a design encountered on the thin copper farthings issued c.1613-48 before the Williamson series started. At 24mm and 3.72gm it is of totally the wrong size, construction and style to be associated with them, of course, nor is the style typical of British crude lead as a whole. Could it even be foreign?

Even less ambiguous is Fig.5, a chunky uniface piece whose size and thickness marks it as nudging the end of the 18th cent. Yet, there is a clear definition of a hand, or glove, which marks the issuers' occupation in a way which is not usually that clearly defined on a lead piece so late. Such depiction of one's trade is more a feature which we associate with the 17th cent, and it is a pleasure to see it retained. Finally, an oddball piece to leave you with, to ponder {Fig.6}; I have not the least idea what it is, and I welcome suggestions! At 38mm and 26.32gm it has to be at least of the cartwheel generation, although stylistically it does not fit comfortably there, either; it does not have the thickness, and the design, a large letter "A" within the petals of a flower, is raised far more strongly than is normal. For those wondering what is on the other side, it is uniface.



## Precise Day and Month on Lead

In LTT\_118, at the bottom of page 4, I drew attention to the existence of a main series 17th cent token which had an exact day and month on it: 3 June 1652. The challenge laid down was to find a lead token with the same feature and, as often, the odds against were thought to be quite long. However, one has come to light, in the form of Fig.2:

- ⇒ Obverse: Initials LRS, 8-petalled flower above
- ⇒ Reverse: Date, 30 OCT 1808, in two rows.



The only provenance information I have is that the last two owners have both been Frenchmen, living in France, and have owned it between them for over 20 years.. There does not seem to be anything about the design, however, which suggests it has one national identity rather than another. As with the first piece, there does not seem to be anything of obvious major significance about the date; for whilst 30 Oct 1808 occurred during the Napoleonic War, there were no major battles fought on that day.

So, how do we interpret the piece? One possibility, borrowing from the 16/17/18th cent English tradition, is that L+R were a married couple with surname initial S. Another is that S stands for Society, and LR the long-forgotten name of said society; that would be a slightly more modern idea. Another is that the piece is an admission ticket to some event arranged for the date noted.

The previous owner dismissed quite quickly my suggestion that maybe L+R got married on 30 Oct 1808, saying that marriage medals were only usually issued in silver and by the “bourgeoisie”; however, whilst that is sometimes the case, there are plenty of examples of copper Georgian halfpennies being engraved by, or for, those occupying a more moderate position in the social scale. Jabez Stott and Mary Whittaker {Fig.3} were one such couple who, whether commissioning their token to celebrate their teenage love or commemorate their marriage in Manchester on 21 June 1802, seemingly went on to have a happy marriage which produced at least four children and fifteen grandchildren. Jabez himself was variously described as an iron turner or mechanic; of his three children by Mary who survived infancy, his son was a brassfounder and his daughters married, respectively, a cheese dealer and a barber.



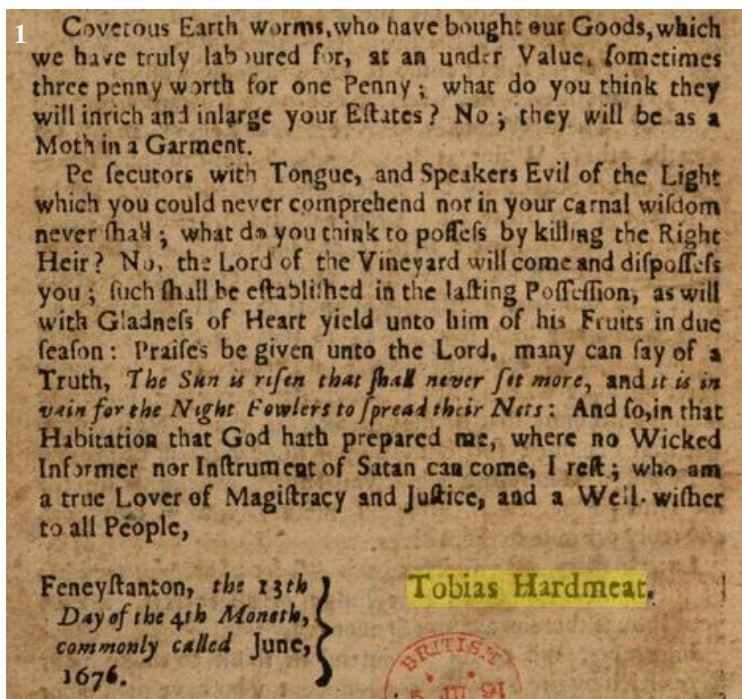
Did Jabez make the piece himself, one might ask? Given his metalworking skill, possibly; but if he did, then he had a useful sideline from his main work, for other similar pieces are known by the same hand. Fig.4, that of John Whittam and Margaret Hamilton, shows marked similarities of style; and, with the new cartwheel pennies of 1797 freshly available, engravers had pleasantly large flans to work with. OK, Jabez’ and Mary’s family were craftsmen and shopkeepers, but criminals and soldiers found means to commission their transportation pieces and kitbag tags respectively, so obviously whatever facilities were available were not beyond the reach of many humble labourers. Is it beyond the bounds of possibility that a few of them, faced with the usual choice of metals, chose to go for lead? I think it feasible, just, but on balance I still favour the 1808 piece being an admission ticket.

## On Beehives and Non-Conformity

Since writing about beehives on tokens in LTT\_123, I have realised that, although particularly popular during the period of the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath, they were in fact in evidence a good while before. Bryant Lillywhite, in his "London Signs" quotes four mid-17th cent examples of beehives as shop signs, whilst Williamson quotes the device as appearing on eight tokens. Of the latter, one is a pun on the issuer's surname whilst on two the beehive appears as part of a personal armorial device; however, the rest are presumably signs.

The issuers of 17th cent tokens were not all just mundane shopkeepers; amongst them, there are many with further tales to tell. Tobias Hardmeat may at first glance sound more like one of the less successful "Master Chef" contestants, but he had another life apart from trading as a grocer at the sign of the Beehive in Fen{ny}stanton. Like many of the early Quakers he was active in the religious politics of the day, and wrote pamphlets arguing his case {Fig.1 runs to eight pages}; and like many who did not subscribe to the beliefs of either of the Civil War's two main competing religious factions, he suffered at the hands of their zero-tolerance approach. Joseph Besse recorded the Quaker persecutions for posterity, county by county, and Tobias gets several mentions {Fig.3}. It all seems rather arbitrary; an effective fine for something which was not a genuine offence and did not inflict any harm, taken in the form of distrained goods which were then knocked down at a reduced price to the relatives and mates of the so-called "Justice" who imposed the penalty. In other words, a scam.

The selling by "inch of candle", alluded to in Fig.3, is a form of auction whereby the last bid made before the candle goes out wins. As there is some uncertainty as to when precisely that will occur, it is effectively a 17th cent anti-sniping device. Ebayers take note!



Non-Conformists, and particularly Quakers, are disproportionately represented in Williamson. Deprived of participation in certain forms of civilian life, such as the holding of offices, commerce was an area of useful activity which they most frequently turned to; plus, the Quakers were meticulous about cultivating a reputation for responsible and honest business dealing, and tokens fitted well with this ethos.



		l.	s.	d.	
Distrresses for Meetings.	From Robert Lijfer, Jobn Lijfer, Tobias Hardmeat, Jobn Parnel, Robert Stow, and Jobn Whitehead, Goods worth	}	25	10	8
	Tobias Hardmeat at another Time, a Cow and an Horse worth		}	6	0
	which were sold to the Brother of Justice Heron for 45s.				
	From Tobias Hardmeat at a third Time, Goods worth which were sold by Inch of Candle for 2 l. 5 s.		7	0	0
	From Chivillather Maidbone for himself and his Wife				

The idea of issuing a promissory item with clear ownership, like a token, and redeeming it at an appropriate time, clearly appealed to them. Whether they were similarly happy to issue lead pieces, with their lesser scope for stating the issuer's name and location in full, would be interesting to know.

How do we know that Tobias was a grocer? Conveniently, the Survey of London, Vol.27, relating to Spitalfields { <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol27/pp24-38> }, records that a certain quartet of developers “granted building leases of a site facing Steward Street and Gun Street to Tobias Hardmeat of St. Ives, Hunts., grocer” in 1683. Evidently his business was expanding. After several decades of political turmoil and the loss of most if not all of his children in infancy, it would be good to think that perhaps he was eventually allowed to trade in peace for a few years before his death in 1703.

Another feature for which the Quakers were renowned, apart from their integrity, was the quality of their record-keeping. This has several benefits for the researcher, amongst which are that:

- ⇒ their birth, marriage and death registers are often more detailed than other equivalents of similar date.
- ⇒ an usually large number of early journals exist.
- ⇒ marriage certificates are traditionally signed by everybody present who was able to do so.
- ⇒ there exists on the open shelves at Friends House in London a central record called DQB, Dictionary of Quaker Biography, in which the Tobias Hardmeats of this world may be readily looked up. Stored in paper binders at typically one person to the page, this runs to a very large alcove of floor-to-ceiling bookcases.

Many of the Williamson tokens have such tales to tell, hiding in the records for us to find; this one is not unusual. No doubt the lead ones do as well, but due to their relative anonymity are even more elusive!

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## An Armorial Selection



A fine 17th cent armorial piece to start with this month, and with the rare luxury of a decent provenance; Fig.1 was found on Gallows Hill in Warwick, near the castle., and the finder, a local, readily recognised the arms of the well-known Nevill family, the Earls of Warwick. 30mm across and a hefty 23.19gm, this chunky uniface piece is likely to have been a pass to some part of their estate, most probably the castle itself.



Fig.2, similar in colour and date, and also uniface, probably had a very similar purpose. It is less imposing, in that there are no arms, but it does depict a crown, and with a hole at the top it is probably a badge of office, with some indication of privileged access implied, for some part of a royal estate. At 25mm and 8.69gm, it is a more modest piece, and if it were not for the crown one might suspect a beggar's badge; except also that those are usually very heavy, to deter their wearers from being beggars for longer than was necessary! I weighed one once; it was 181gm, or nearly 6½ ounces, rather heavier than most things which people care to have dangling round their neck.

A rather more amusing armorial piece is Fig.3, of unknown provenance. One presumes that the central grid is a crude attempt at populating a shield, but with the various faint appendages to top and sides one could imagine that we are looking at a very fat man waddling along in a suit of armour.



## Seasonal Greetings, when the time gets here....



We are getting back round to Santa-down-the-chimney time again; only a few weeks to go now, and with it comes the thought that Father Christmas might have needed the assistance of a few folk over the years to ensure that, after a night-time of slithering up and down chimneys, his cloak was still as shiny red at the end of it as it was at the beginning. Some of them



might require to be paid, of course, and to do that he would have to arm himself with a goodly bag of kaminkehrerzeichen. It is a bit of a mouthful, but a “Kaminkehrer” is a chimney sweep and zeichen is German for, guess what, token. You can add “zeichen” on to the end of any commodity you can think of and you have a word to describe its attendant paranumismatica; so, remember it, it might come in handy again.

Opinion varies as to whether Santa is fictional but kaminkehrerzeichen, or chimney sweep tokens, are decidedly not. The one above {only magnified 3:2} comes from Augsburg, one of a number of German and other continental cities who had been getting more and more worried during the late Middle Ages about the ever-increasing number of house fires. Wooden building construction was commonplace, and London’s 1666 mishap was far from being the only urban disaster of its type.

Remedial action will have varied from country to country but by the 15th cent there was a strong move towards outlawing all wooden chimneys in favour of stone and bringing in collective fire regulations for the local community. As the concept of civic and urban administration grew during the 16th and 17th cents, these rules were then incorporated into local law and, as time went by, increasingly enhanced and added to by the national or municipal authorities. Amongst the provisions made, in some cases, was a clause that the regular sweeping of chimneys, at intervals, was compulsory.

How precisely that was enforced is lost to us now, but a couple of possibilities are:

- ⇒ The local authority sold you a token every so often and you then used it to pay a chimney sweep, who would revert to the authority to redeem it. The latter would keep a record of both halves of the transaction, by way of proof. All very well provided the customer wasn’t a numismatist, who chose to retain it for his collection rather than spend it {probably a bit of a luxury in those days}.
- ⇒ The chimney sweep was provided with a supply of tokens by the local authority {maybe he was one of their employees anyway}. He would give one to each customer, and report back as to whom he had issued them. The authority would again keep records, and the customer had a metal receipt which he could produce by way of proof.

The Augsburg example depicts the city arms on one side and appropriate symbols, such as burning logs, on the other. By British standards, mainland European tokens are markedly ahead of their time in terms of sophistication, and no way are we going to find well-produced 26mm copper over here in 1551. I am not aware of any confirmed usages of English tokens in connection with fire prevention, but the use of crude lead must be a possibility. Fire is a difficult subject to draw; the image on the reverse of the Augsburg piece is one of the more obscure to appear on a decent copper piece, so maybe a few of our type 9 lead pieces, “irregular geometrics” as they are known, depict fire also!

### ....which leads us on to:

Several years ago in LTT 78 and 81, we briefly explored, in “Clues from across the Channel”, a number of European mainland tokens which had functions similar to lead tokens. These were mainly to do with usages of which we were already aware, such as municipal or ecclesiastical administration, including charitable distribution to the poor. Since then I have become aware of other categories, of which the above chimney sweeps’ token is one, and it now seems time to look at this subject again, in the hope that by comparison we will learn more about what some of our own anonymous material, mostly lead, might have been used for. So, watch this space in 2020!