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 Please note that the old david@powell18041.freeserve.co.uk address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

Mysteries for Readers to Solve....



Fig.1

The above group of lead was, unusually for LTT, acquired by a correspondent at auction rather than by a detectorist or mudlark who had found them. He bought them simply because he liked them and thought that they were fun, but there was no provenance information and he has absolutely no idea what they are, nor even what part of the world they come from. They are tiny; maximum size 11mm, some a lot less. For the benefit of those wishing to give them a deeper look, Tim has kindly written up a detailed analysis which I have put on page 5. It is good to see a sizeable group with a sense of common themes running through them, but if anyone can come up with any ideas then Tim and I would be most grateful.

For your second question, a much more English mystery in the shape of a very standard 17th cent piece with the usual triad of initials, in this case C/II. Roger Paul has kindly sent in Fig.2, and to that I have been able to add Fig.3, which is the same



piece issued from another die. On the reverse there appears to be something which looks at first glance like an egg-timer, or hour-glass, as it was then known, which presumably is some indication of the issuer's shop-sign or trade. Research online suggests that this is feasible, as the hourglass was invented as far back as the 14th cent, so two questions:

- ⇒ Do we believe that these tokens depict an hourglass, and if not what is it?
- ⇒ If it is an hour-glass, what might be the issuer's trade? Or is it just a shop-sign?

Continental Counterparts, part 2: Utilities

Having started this series of articles with reference to fire and water, let us conclude with firefighting before moving on to the other utilities and essential commodities. When all the efforts of the chimney sweep have been in vain and your house has actually caught fire, you can call the fire brigade, who in Amsterdam and the other major cities of the Netherlands, employ brandspuitpenning, or Fire Officers' identification tokens, to record their attendance. According to one source a cylindrical container was supplied on the fire engine, into which these could be dropped on arrival, and from the order of these tokens, or attendance badges, a measure of the promptness of response could be deduced. There was a premium payable for making oneself available as promptly as possible, and hence motivation for the firemen to comply.



These are almost invariably large pieces, either in the simple format of Fig.1, which is 36mm counter-stamped brass, or more usually the more sophisticated type like Fig.2, diameter 43mm, which shows the fire equipment on one side and the arms of the city on the other. On the simpler piece, the three upright St.Andrew's crosses are those which feature on the city arms of Amsterdam. On both pieces there is a letter "W", standing for Wijk, or district. The district number immediately follows, and the other number is that of the individual officer. Here we have wijk 49, fireman 14 {Fig.1} and wijk 35, fireman 15 {Fig.2} respectively.

Other simpler pieces show another simple form of brandspuitpenning on which is engraved the function of the team member {e.g. pompier} with his number on one side and the pump to which he is assigned on the other. These have a small hole in, no doubt for hanging on a hook in the fire station in the manner of a factory's clocking-on check or tool ticket, to which they are very similar in concept. This commercial use of engraving for work-related identity disks, such as guild membership tickets {gildepennig}, is common in the Netherlands, and we may meet the phenomenon again. In France it was also used for "Jetons des Marchands des Halles", commonly known over here as market checks, some examples of which will appear in a later article.



Next, heating and lighting. Heating in those days usually meant either wood or peat, both of which also had industrial uses as well as domestic. Fig.3 is reported by Minard-van Hoorebeke {1879} as being issued by one of the churches in Bruges, and is therefore almost certainly a charity token; "V" stands for "Voor", i.e. "for", with "for benefit of the poor" implied; underneath are three bundles of fagots. The piece is made of brass, and for some reason is 38mm and 15.50gm. One can imagine similar usage in Britain, with lead tokens of rather smaller size. Fig.4, from the German principality

of Schaumberg-Lippe, and with arms to back its authority, is almost certainly an official peat token; chunky white metal this time, and even heavier at 20.82gm, despite its lesser diameter. Again, it will probably be for distribution to the poor. In Britain, the appearance of shovels on 17th cent tokens is often associated with bakers' peels, the long spades used to get loaves in and out of ovens, but elsewhere I am not aware of any such association; so, here we can probably assume with some comfort that peat rather than bread is intended; however, back home and on crude lead, where spade-like devices do occur, we perhaps need to think more about whether turf, rather than bread, is indicated. Quite possibly both are represented amongst the various issues, with distinction not always easy.

I will move on to tokens associated with the industrial handling of fuels, be it peat or coal, next time, but let us complete the domestic utilities by looking at lighting. Specifically, at the Hamburg piece, again identified by the city arms, of Fig.5. "Leuchten Ronde", with "No.2" engraved above; some German words translate very easily, and that is lighting round no.2. Its user will be a gaslighter, such as used to go round the streets of London and other large towns and cities in Britain. So, why does our German lamplighter need a token and his equivalent in Britain not? or perhaps the latter did, and we just haven't realised it yet. By the way, you will see those Hamburg arms again in a few months, on an almost identically sized piece, and a similar lettering and font size on the reverse, but saying something entirely different; nor is Hamburg the only city to issue tokens for diverse purposes with one side common to preserve familiarity.



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Storing and Cataloguing Lead Tokens

I would imagine that many people's reaction to reading the above title will be "throw it in a box, or maybe even a bin if condition dictates; end of subject". Well, you can do that, of course, but if you are actually interested in the things it doesn't help you to study them effectively; you need to lay them out, ideally, or, if you do hide them away, at least know where to find what when you want to.

One step up from throwing them in a box is to throw them in an envelope and then throw that in a box, in some sort of order which aids retrieval. If you use paper envelopes then you can write all over the things, which is great, except that trying to describe lead tokens accurately is nigh on impossible given that they have very little lettering and endless individualities of style. Fine for coins of the realm, not for A.N.Other's DIY numismatic productions made in his own back yard.

Next, you need to be able to see the things, so, you can put them in plastic envelopes; well, in theory, except that lead is one of the more reactive metals and can be expected to react adversely if left in plastic for any length of time. Even copper and brass gets sticky after a few years, sufficiently so that the piece is unpleasant to the touch and requires a little bit of careful cleaning to restore it. Lead deteriorates even faster. The finest collection of BNJ54 type M that I know, put together by somebody who died in 1999, was oxidising nicely in plastic album pages when I last saw it in 2011.

Trays take up more space, but they are the best way; you can view a whole expanse of material at once. I use plastic Lindner trays with square insets of various sizes, but others will have their own ways. I keep items of like size together, using trays with inset sizes of 24,30,38,50mm, and then a few 66mm trays for accommodating sets of differently-sized items like hop tokens, which vary enormously in diameter as the denomination varies from 1 to 120 bushels, but which I do not want to split.

I am not a chemist, so I will leave storage there and move on to cataloguing. Those more scientifically-minded than I will remark on the various merits or demerits of certain types of wood or fabric, when

placed in long-term contact with a coin; but we are talking lead tokens, so don't let us go over the top. Others have written about the fine detail, if you are minded to explore it.

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We live in the days of the Excel spreadsheet, and for those of us who lack the knowledge to set up a full-blooded database and just want something simple, it {or an equivalent} is a fine tool. You can search on it; you can sort on it. I would suggest the following fields {columns} as desirable:

- ⇒ Reference number {for method of use, see below}
- ⇒ Obverse description
- ⇒ Reverse description
- ⇒ Date, if any.
- ⇒ Location in trays
- ⇒ Diameter {mm}
- ⇒ Weight {gm, to 2 decimal places}
- ⇒ Provenance
- ⇒ Other notes

Further fields, like obverse and reverse classification numbers, or cross-references to published catalogues, can be added to taste. A few notes now on some of the above:

Reference numbers: why bother? Because if you put a small paper disc in the relevant slot, with the number written on it, you can match up token with entry and will know where to put back anything which accidentally strays. With a proper coin you would have a description; e.g. Victoria Old Head, halfcrown, 1893. You can't get that on a 24mm diameter label for a lead token, so just put the reference number on, plus the classifications of the two sides, and maybe the date if there is one, and let the spreadsheet do the rest.



Lindner tray, 48 slots {30mm apiece}

You won't be able to describe a lead token perfectly, so just do your best. If it helps to be informal about it, fine. Use abbreviations, e.g. "ex" for exergue, "insc" for inscription, and whatever personal shorthand you like, provided you can remember what it means. I use A/BC for a 17th cent initial triad, for example; or, if I can't read it because of condition, maybe A/{B or R}{C,G,or retro-S}.

Location in trays: I number the trays, and then use location references of the form TTRC; so, if the illustrated tray was number 23 and I was going to put a token in the top right-hand corner slot, that would be 2316. You can then sort on location when you want to get a whole tray's description in one place, regardless of the order in which the acquisitions were added. If you want to move things around, just do so and edit the location entry.

Weight may not matter a lot of the time, but there is one crucial time when it comes into its own; namely, when you drop a tray of the things. I took part of my own collection round to a friend's house once and tripped over a paving stone just before I got there, leaving me with several trays of material to re-home when I got back. If you know that the token in your hand is 4.96gm and you have the weight of your entire collection on a spreadsheet, then search for 4.96, or 4.9* {wildcard} and you should find it. If you don't, try 4.95 or 4.97. There is more than one way to skin a cat and the use of diameter and weight is a far quicker way of remedying a disaster than trying to search the vagaries of your descriptions!

Tim's Mystery Buy

My only comment on Tim's mystery hoard is that a number of the pieces have the appearance of being slightly scyphate, i.e. saucer-shaped, which as far as coins go is a feature of the late Byzantine period and not much else; however, that may be purely coincidental, and merely due to hammering. The only previous time I can remember discussing anything this small was the Herefordshire group discussed on page 2 of LTT_69, but these are nothing like those. However, Tim has kindly written up a detailed analysis of his pieces, below, which I will leave those who are so minded to study:



- Size:** 11mm/1.68gm down to 6mm/0.5gm with most towards the higher end of the range
- Shape:** Some of the flans seem to have a slight curvature that I'd say that it comes from hammering the reverse design(s) in and not nearly as significant as some of the Byzantine cup shaped types. Some of the designs being hammered in seem to be a bit concave leading to the curvature.
- Bifaced:** All of them have design elements on both sides

Design elements {general}:

There seems to be a series of layered designs where they first apply some larger full flan punches in most cases as the primary background design (circle edge, radial lines from off-centre circle, a very regular triangular hatch mark pattern, etc..) and then additional primary and secondary hammered punches applied on top.

Primary design elements:

The two predominant primary designs seem to combine one main obverse with one of two reverses:

Obverse: a radiate figure, bust or full figure, (with head and torso formed by pellets and or lines). I'd consider it a deity of some sort, with an apparent diagonal cross behind more often than not.

Reverse 1: Some sort of linear/pellet design of four pellets and three lines within a circle/oval that I can't really identify and that is usually applied on top of the circular punch off centre thus leaving what seems like a crescent but that may be unintentional and just sloppy centering of the punch.

Reverse 2: A cross (quadrupartite) design (sometimes with a central pellet) that has rounded (or maybe they are all just worn) Letters in each of the Quadrants: Something like A - M - C (or G) - B (or D, C, G, E). This might be a key to identifying them but it doesn't mean much to me right now. (This design is somewhat reminiscent to me of some of the Byzantine bronze reverses where there is a cross and letters in the quadrants but that may be just irrelevant).

Secondary design elements:

The secondary design elements of additional hand punched marks (stars, odd shaped punches shaped like a deer hoofprint or a circle with a triangular bit missing, sometimes with what seems like it could be a figure inside). The spacing of the elements is not uniform and seems to imply they were individually applied. The size and number of rays on the stars is variable, 8 pointed, 13/14 pointed stars, etc...

Each piece seems to be uniquely and individually hand created using multiple punches; although without a lot of attention to precision, as the centering/spacing of various devices seems haphazard.