

A free newsletter to all who contribute illustrations for use in the forthcoming book, *Leaden Tokens & Tallies*. To receive Issue Five of this newsletter you must send the editor at least one 300 dpi JPEG scan, or a sharply focused photo print, of any interesting leaden token in your collection. Send images as email attachments to [LTTeditor@aol.com](mailto:LTTeditor@aol.com)



## WANT TO MAKE FINDS LIKE THESE ?

### A New Detecting Season Is Almost Upon Us. Will You Do Better This Year?

By the time this issue becomes last month's issue bare soil will lie exposed to the advances of thrusting detector heads in the most fecund regions of East Anglia and the South East. The first crop of new images - Leaden Beaujolais - will drop into my email in-box to confirm commencement of yet another productive season for leaden token and tally hunters. I have every confidence that remarkable discoveries will come to light ... and I'm equally sure that the usual crop of dedicated detectorists will make the best finds. What are the secrets of their successes; and can other readers learn to match them?

*They search counties rich in leaden losses.* Undeniably true; but I've received reports of good finds from just about every county in lowland England. What's more, the large number of detectorists in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Kent takes the edge off the advantage because the number of productive hectares remains the same season after season. The trick lies in winning more permissions and searching more often if you live in a county with few detectorists.

*They use better detectors than the rest of us.* All modern detectors are highly sensitive to lead. Indeed lead probably comes first after gold in the list of non-ferrous metals a modern detector can find.

*They are better at operating their machines.* That's a tremendous advantage. If you don't know how to ground-balance your detector; if you apply too much discrimination when searching because you don't want the "inconvenience" of doubtful signals, then you will miss some deep losses. Lead, the heaviest metal after gold, sinks deeply in the ground.

*They've done more research.* And don't they deserve the resulting rewards? Enormous numbers of historical documents and other records await your attention in every county. Spend the time from now until the ploughs begin turning sods in your locality to do some research at the county library or records office. Many regions of England surpass East Anglia and the South East when it comes to research facilities.

*They detect more frequently than I do.* Yes, and they probably spend far longer during every search swinging their search heads left-right across the field. Armchair detectorists, and those who spend most of their detecting day socializing, or brewing tea at the edge of the field, make fewer finds. What you get out of detecting is proportional to what you put into it.

*Good finds in previous years guide them to productive fields, and to the spots within each field where tokens and tallies invariably turn up after ploughing.* Also true ... So why don't you do the same? Go back to any field that yielded leaden finds last year. Try again this year, especially if the farmer has ploughed deeply for a crop such as sugar beet. There may be members of your local club who don't collect leaden tokens and tallies, but who have found them in the past. A site swap might get you onto a bonanza field.

**Note: A forthcoming article in *Treasure Hunting* magazine has further advice on locating spots likely to hold excellent leaden tokens and tallies.**



# David Powell On His Classification System

## Type 2: Lettering (continued)

Retrograde letters and numbers are frequently found on lead tokens, and do not hold any great significance; whether the makers were dyslexic, or just unable to fathom which way round they were meant to cut the die, is open to debate. Perhaps nobody really cared. If you look at the parish records of the period the rule was, if it sounded right, the spelling was OK. Perhaps the same attitude applied to the visual image. What is a mirror image between friends?

Lettering styles are very much a matter of taste. I go for big bold ones like the GH seen in **fig 1**. These sometimes have a pellet at the junction of their lines, or halfway down their long curves. I like well-formed letters generally, as in **fig 2**. I have a dislike for the slim and puny, as in **fig 3**, some of which are so tentative that one cannot with certainty say whether they are initials or not.

fig 1



fig 2



fig 3



Certain letters clearly announce their periods of issue or usage. A Lombardic initial (**fig 4**) clearly says, "I am mid 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier"; usually such pieces are very dark lead as opposed to middling grey, which in turn strongly suggests they are London. The DB piece (**fig 5**) is actually a type 15 by virtue of its crozier; but it serves to illustrate a point; its lettering is modern, but the crozier suggests 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century and its reverse is late medieval. Use of known old lettering forms such as "ff", instead of modern F, has dating implications. The N/RE and G/CA pieces (**figs 6, 7**) are of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century style, with the diameter of the contemporary copper farthing tokens to match.

fig 4



fig 5



fig 6



fig 7



The reverse-R piece (**fig 8**) looks like a Kentish hop token, with all the characteristics of some of the smallest value {one bushel/penny} pieces found in Alan Henderson's excellent book on the series, whilst pieces with initials accompanied by a number, particularly 3, 6, or 12 (**figs 9,10**) are even more markedly from the same source. The known provenances of Alan's pieces tend to start in the mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and I will tentatively conjecture that the IB/6 and retro-IS pieces come from near the beginning of that period. Or is the frequent retro IS in reality a retro 12? More on this when we come to type 8!

fig 8



fig 9



fig 10



fig 11



One series which does mystify me is the H-followed-by-a-number series, as seen in **fig 11** where I illustrate three such pieces (H1, H4, H7) and invite readers to comment as to whether they have seen any others, and what might be their origin. Is H a unit of measure?

Occasionally pieces are seals, in which case any initials are marks of ownership, or they register authority (**fig 12**), whilst I suspect that the more decorative pieces with letters amidst ornate scrolling or other design work, as in **figs 13, 14**, are those of proprietors or landed gentry; truck tokens, passes or the like. Yet who can tell with certainty?



fig 12



figs 13



figs 14

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*Editor's comment: The H-plus-number series reminds me that my grandfather worked in a northern factory where the men were offered either time or piecework rates. Could H-plus-number have been a tally of hours worked?*

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### *Towards A Classification Of Usages*

I've grown envious of David Powell's classification system. He appears to have the entire world of leaden token and tally designs and shapes neatly sewn up and sorted while I flounder and dither and - more often than not - fail to come up with much in the way of hard evidence for any token and tally uses apart from the glaringly obvious and already thoroughly raked over and classified series such as hop and communion tokens.

Well, perhaps that's a little harsh. Back issues have thrown some light on those enigmatic petals ... and evidence linking leaden pieces with mill sites continues to creep in ... and there's that amazing breakthrough which all who receive PAGE FIVE will have at their fingertips on/around July 3rd. But it all amounts to a mediocre molehill considering the many months I and a handful of helpful readers have devoted to the subject.

Time to try a new tack. Instead of leafing through dusty, un-indexed tomes in hope of spotting words such as *leaden* and *dump* and *tavern token*, I'm proposing a brainstorming session. I invite every reader to send me a suggestion for using small lead / pewter pieces in a way that might have benefited people in the past. No silly suggestions, please. On the other hand, why feel inhibited? The only way in which a *reasonable* suggested use gets removed from the brainstorming list will be the presentation of an even more reasonable argument against it. I've started the ball rolling on page four. I eagerly await your suggestions or arguments against my initial rollings ...



## LEADEN TOKEN & TALLY USAGE BRAINSTORMER

SUGGESTED USE	EVIDENCE, IF ANY
Theatre tickets	Unearthed on sites of Ancient Greek theatres. Leaden tickets depicting actors found.
Charitable meal tickets	Numerous finds/references from Roman world; tesserae frumetaria. Private and public uses.
Brothel tokens	<i>Spintriae</i> in Roman literature. Medieval types known.
Feast/festival tokens	Saturnales .. Feast of Fools ... Boy Bishop, etc.
Votive pieces	Offerings at temples, shrines. Those depicting animals, etc. probably recording sacrifices made.
Money	Numerous references to lead money - from Roman Egypt to 9th c Scotland.
Membership	Similar to freemasonry tokens, but leaden. Labrot mentions leaden pieces used by guilds.
Good luck tokens	e.g. ... Leaden piece similar to a long-cross penny kept in medieval purse to ward off devil. Includes witches' sigils.
Game pawn/checker	Labrot mentions hopscotch. Probably many similar games used leaden pieces.
Tavern tokens	Used as farthings. May also have served as receipts connected with tavern activities.
Attendance records	Labrot mentions use of merreaux to record priests' attendances at mass, etc.
Jettons	Gold, silver, brass jettons all know. Why not leaden jettons?
Pilgrims tokens	Making and selling leaden pieces to pilgrims was a major ecclesiastical industry.
Work done tallies	Numerous uses including hop tokens.
Deposits tallies	e.g. ... as receipts for cash handed over when borrowing/hiring crates, sacks, etc. ... tool checks(?)
Milling pieces	Probably a sub-division of one or two immediately above, but entered here because mill sails/wheels observed on finds.
Missiles in games involving throwing.	SEE PAGE FIVE
Toy money	Anybody found leaden examples?
Recycled tokens	e.g. ... drilled to make lead buttons, weights. ... overstruck pieces

### Small Ads: Swaps, Contacts, Miscellaneous, etc.

#### NUMISMATIST ?

You can view back issues at  
[www.leadtokens.org.uk](http://www.leadtokens.org.uk)

#### AT THREE CRANES

If you have any lead tokens with part of their legend reading

#### AT THREE CRANES

please contact  
**Phil Mernick**  
 who is researching them.  
 Email: [phil@mernicks.com](mailto:phil@mernicks.com)  
 Phone: 020-8980-5672

#### NO PC AT HOME?

You can now view all back issues of the LTT at any public library or internet café. Go to:

[www.treasurehunting.tv](http://www.treasurehunting.tv) then click on Articles ... then click on Leaden Tokens.

NOTE: To get the LATEST ISSUE on your PC screen you must send us a 300 dpi JPEG scan or a sharp photo print of any leaden piece in your collection. If you send illustrations as scans by email, or on a CD; or if you send photoprints, you could win a signed FREE copy of the book on publication. Send CD's or photo prints to Ted Fletcher, 39 Arundel Court, Verney Road, London SE16 3DB

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 SHOWN AT 1/8th SIZE.**

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