

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 [dmpowell@waitrose.com](mailto:dmpowell@waitrose.com) or [david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk). Please note that the old [LJEditor@aol.com](mailto:LJEditor@aol.com) address advertised on some earlier versions of LJT is no longer active.*

## Have a Heart!

Can anyone please figure out why the heart figures so prominently on 17th and 18th cent tokens? OK, it is the expression of love, but that is the sort of thing most people do quietly. One sees graffiti, "A loves B" scrawled occasionally on a wall, and in the numismatic world engraved pieces are known where someone has taken a coin of the realm, usually very worn, and scratched or engraved on it the name of his beloved, perhaps with some verse, design or term of endearment; but these are all presumably very individual, not requiring to be manufactured in such quantity that a die or mould has to be prepared for them.



Someone might supposedly make a supply of such pieces for lovehearts to purchase, I guess, with the object of the purchaser giving them to his other half as a keepsake; but would that suffice to explain the quantity of these pieces found? Presumably these would have to be stock pieces, which the purchaser would have to scratch or engrave the name of his beloved on. Many of the heart pieces just aren't large enough for that.



Hart, if not heart, is a reasonably common but not over-common surname, which could explain a small percentage of the issue. Using the main 17th century series as a guideline, there are ten issuers of the name in Williamson, of whom four use a heart and one a hart {deer} as a pun. There are, however, at least seventy-odd issuers overall who depict hearts on their tokens, which means that only about 5-6% had personal identity as a reason for doing so. The word heart, as opposed to hart, does not appear very often in pub names; and, even remembering that the concept of sign-identified premises was more enhanced in the 17th cent than it is now, i.e. extended to other businesses beyond hostelries, it hardly accounts for an increase of nearly twentyfold in the number of heart-depicting issues. Illustrated in Figs.13-15 are the pieces of Amuel Hart of Lyme Regis {Dorset 96, pun}, James Coston of Deal {Kent 148}, and Thomas Postle of Southwold [Suffolk 298]. The positioning of the heart between the initials on the Kent piece is particularly delightful, conveying the impression, rightly or wrongly, that James really did love his Elizabeth.



Some of the hearts, a moderate minority, are pierced; usually diagonally, only very rarely along the horizontal or vertical. A number are double pierced. This has ancient religious meaning, associated with Christ and the Virgin Mary; how much this meant to your average small shopkeeper 1600 years later is uncertain, although it cannot be denied that churchgoing was the norm and that religious imagery, sometimes obscure, remained the tradition. Communion tokens {CTs} occasionally depict hearts, or have them counterstruck. One of Figs 16-17 is a CT, the other is an ordinary lead; can you tell which?

At least the philosophy behind the communion service is built on a love relationship, so in this case there is some more obvious reason for the heart. The examples shown are:

- Fig.17. Sorbie, Wigtownshire {1776}
- Fig.18. Grange, Banffshire {undated, mid-18c}
- Fig.19. Etal Northumberland {1724}

...thus answering my quiz question on page 1!



Another possible theory, dismissible fairly quickly, is that the heart pieces were card tokens. But how many people played cards in the 17th and 18th centuries? Such as did were mostly not of the same class of society that used lead tokens. For the card theory to hold water, you would need to find club, diamond and spade tokens in equal quantities, which you don't. The odd spade is occasionally seen, equally obscure in origin but probably an emblematic symbol of authority. The lis and petal types occasionally throw up something which approximates to a club; diamonds would have to rely on types 9 and 31, i.e. shapes, and occur hardly ever. No, our hearts are not card tokens.



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The heart was also an anomaly when I devised my lead token classification system. Originally body parts went in type 27; but that being intended for inanimate objects, I decided that I needed to make them a separate category, for which reason type 33 was born. Of the other inhabitants of type 33, however, hands, feet and even genitals can both be physically touched and used for employment. Glovers, cordwainers and prostitutes all plied their trade {admittedly, pieces with genitals on may be misplaced humour, rather than genuine indication of employment}; however, no-one other than a surgeon, a butcher or an executioner ever handled a heart, and nobody ever used one for anything. So, they are symbolic, rather than fleshly, hearts; but there are rather a lot of them. I will pretend that they are a body part and leave them in type 33 but, seeing that the heart design seems most likely to have been employed in the same manner as petals, anchors and the like, as a stock token design, I wonder by hindsight whether I should have given them a class of their own.



Names on heart-shaped pieces, as with all lead, are rare. "Fan" on Fig.22 may be short for Fanny or Frances, beautifully styled; she must have meant a lot to her boyfriend JB, for him to go to that much trouble. He did a fairly good job of the back as well; one of the more ornate anchors complete with rope, flanked by his initials and a surprisingly late date, 1845, the second latest I have seen. It comes from County Durham. The second named piece {Fig.23} is probably 18th cent, with two names, but in much poorer condition. At first it looks as if the edge is merely a grenetis, i.e. filler, but on closer inspection the name "William Wicks" can just be made out. The obvious thing is to turn it over in the hope of making out a second name, probably female, on the other side; but whilst there is obviously wording there, only the odd letter can be deciphered, not enough to be identifiable.

There are also, of course, pieces in these same series which are heart-shaped, rather than which depict hearts; whether for the same unestablished reason, or just for variety and ease of distinction, one can but conjecture. A number of crude lead examples are shown below. Only Fig.24 is very deliberately heart-shaped. Fig. 25 might have been intended as such, but equally might have lost a fragment due to a metal





fault or, feasibly but less likely, been designed as a holed pendant which was forcibly torn from its chain or cord. Figs.26-29 have more moderate notches which may have been part of the design, and almost certainly were in the examples where the design is heart to match; however, they could instead in one or more cases been invalidation marks made by the issuer to indicate that the piece was no longer current.

There are about 80 heart-shaped pieces in Williamson, and thirty-odd in Burzinski's reference work on CTs. Figs.30-32 are all CTs, the large one from Dunfermline and the other two from Falstone, Northumberland; dates are 1753, 1729 and 1801 respectively. The Williamson heart-shapes are all rather prized and regrettably I do not have one to illustrate!



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Finally, style. It will be seen from the illustrations that the heart was used as subject matter for a fairly lengthy period {chiefly the 17th and 18th cents}, in widely different contexts, and in areas both urban and rural stretching to many parts of the country. It was used by some who had access to equipment capable of producing fine execution, and by others whose facilities were rustic or homemade in the extreme. As with many designs, we are learning that at this lower end of the artistic scale we have to look out for the piece whose execution is so poor that we cannot tell whether it is the intended subject matter or not, and in consequence of which it often finishes up in type 9, "Irregular geometric". Fig.33 is one such piece; its artwork may be poor, but its condition is not. I reckon this one is a shot {excuse the pun} at a pierced heart!



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## Spangles

For most people whose age aspires to that of the average numismatist or metal detector, the word "Spangles" conjures up visions of brightly coloured paper-wrapped sucky sweets of varying flavours, of the type which we used to eat when we were kids. However, the word does have another meaning: the earliest lead token known to mediaeval Britain: in the words of BNJ 53, type A.



Spangles, also known as ampulliform tokens or aumonières {Forgeais found a number in the Seine} date from the early-mid 13th cent and are all uniface. I will remark that the two delightful little pieces on the right are considerably magnified; if I displayed them at their original sizes of 13x10 and 12x8 mm respectively you might find them rather difficult to see. Even by mediaeval standards they are small, which explains their strange design. To avoid losing such small items, two holes were provided at the top, enabling you to sew them on to your clothes. Or, if you didn't fancy having to pull your trousers down every time you made a purchase and wanted to unstitch some, perhaps a loose piece of cloth.

The idea that spangles were an unofficial form of money is not universally accepted; there is a second school of thought that they were impracticable for the purpose and must have had another use, possibly to do with pilgrimage. The Church would certainly have been the issuer. Spangles are not common {BNJ lists only seventeen}, and indeed one does not often see them offered; having said which, the same can be said of contemporary regal farthings, of similar size if not shape, both regarding practicality and rarity. Maybe in due course the increasing power of detection equipment, able to locate ever-smaller items, will prove both items rather commoner than they appear to be at present.

Whether token or not, the spangle designs are nearly all familiar ones which appear later in the series; Fig.1 above is a very simple cross and pellets, fig.2 is more elaborate, an animal of some sort, although not immediately obvious what, despite its very good condition, because of the size. Forgeais found an example of Fig.2 in 1854, and thought it as a lion or leopard. Other known designs include a raven, a two-headed eagle and a ship.

## *Cataloguing and Storing a Lead Token Collection*

Once a collection of coins or tokens reaches any appreciable size, i.e. when you are at the stage that you can no longer lay your hands at will on any particular piece you wish, it is advisable to form a catalogue; to tell you what you have, where they are, where they came from and what else of similar type you have to compare. Indeed, for recording details of provenance, i.e. where pieces were found or bought, it is probably important to record from the start.

With standard coins of the realm, this is markedly easier than with tokens; you know that your 1893 halfcrown will be filed with other pieces of the same denomination, and that they will be in date order; probably either in clear plastic 2x2 envelopes in a box, or laid out in neat rows in a tray. With token series in copper, brass, aluminium and the like it is a little more difficult, depending on the level of anonymity of the piece, but with most of the more popular and well defined of them it is possible still to place them in alphabetical order of county, town and issuer name; in some cases, as with the main 17th, 18th and 19th tokens series, there are good reference works whose numbers you can quote.

No such luxury with crude lead, however; not only do you have the problems of anonymity imposed by the least yielding of modern parnumismatica, e.g. machine tokens, but you also have the fact that (i) the pieces are struck in a metal which is relatively unstable and (ii) the subject matter is often not identifiable, to the point that types seem to merge into each other and descriptions are difficult to attempt. Not to worry, we lead enthusiasts are used to dealing with such little problems.

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First of all, storage. Plastic envelopes are renowned for taking their chemical toll of metals more stable than lead, e.g. copper; put a decent copper or bronze piece in certain plastic envelopes for a few years, and the envelope will finish up bearing an imprint of the piece concerned. When you have removed the piece, it will stick to the envelope and have a horrible greasy feel which will require washing with soapy water to get it off. Not something you want to contemplate with a large number of pieces, quite apart from any resulting damage done to the pieces themselves.

Plastic envelopes also have the downside that they are not so congenial when you want to compare numbers of pieces rather than just look at one, which with lead you frequently need to do.

The way to overcome this is to use trays, typically laid out with a nice rectangular matrix of coin-slots in neat rows. These are expensive, so to get a good break-even it is important to be selective in their use:

1. Use them only for pieces which are either (i) of a metal prone to deterioration or (ii) which you are currently studying.
2. Use them only for pieces which merit being put on display; i.e. which are either (i) of good quality or (ii) exhibit some trait which is of particular interest.

With lead there are a number of relatively poor pieces which do qualify under 2(ii) but, given the high percentage of very low-grade material which does come up in this series, do resist putting everything willy-nilly into your main collection unless it actually says something. To go in the tray, a piece should either look good or interesting; the rubbish, if indeed you deem it worth keeping, can just be stowed in boxes.

It is obviously desirable to keep pieces of similar type and origin together, which is most difficult when the pieces concerned are of wildly diverse size. Fortunately many crude leads are much of a muchness in size and one cannot often link them together anyway, so it is adequate just to choose trays with a few different slot sizes, capable between them of accommodating nearly everything. I use trays with 24mm slots for most pieces, with a smaller number of 30, 38 and 50mm trays to accommodate the remainder. For a series like hop tokens, where there are recognised series in which one wants to keep everything from the small 1 unit to the large 120 unit {pence or bushel} pieces together, I would recommend going for the largest slot-size available, 66mm, and putting families together in one slot. The latter trays are primarily designed for medals, but this is a good alternative use for them.

Finally, avoid storing pieces of unstable metal in places which are either damp or cold. I'm not a chemist to know the precise details, but lead, zinc and tin are all rather fastidious about their living conditions. I am told that 10 deg C {50 deg F} is a particularly bad temperature for tin, with which lead is frequently combined to make pewter tokens. Hopefully nobody's house is that cold, but do think twice before housing your collection in the cellar, garage or garden shed.

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Now to the cataloguing itself. I would suggest that the following might be a reasonable set of data for starters, and have illustrated an example on page 6:

- **Reference number.** Number pieces from 1 up in order of acquisition, just for convenience of reference. Possible that location number could be used a reference, if the piece is numeric; however, not recommended, as you may wish to move your pieces round. For example, I have just tried to separate my 16th/17th cent London lead out from the rest, which has resulted in a considerable amount of relocation.
- **Provenance;** i.e. where geographically the piece was first found or known to derive.
- **Obverse description.** Use a few abbreviations and a bit of slang in moderation if you wish {e.g. "swiss roll" for type 31 concentric circles}, but don't overdo it; try and keep factual. The example on page 6 contains one or two bits of annotation which you may consider better placed in miscellaneous notes.
- **Reverse description.** As obverse above.
- **Date.** Exact dates only appear on a small proportion of lead. You may wish to include estimation for undated pieces; either here, in the miscellaneous notes, or in a separate column.
- **Colour.** I use a scale of 1 {white and visibly cold-affected lead} to 5 {dark Thames-mud patina}, with 3 being the typical provincial 18th-cent norm.
- **Location** {in tray, as opposed to provenance}. Your call, but I find the best way is 100T+10R+P; i.e. 100 times the tray number plus ten times the row number plus the number of the piece in that row. In the sample overleaf, trays 6 and 7 are 24mm Lindner trays for small and middling pieces, tray 4 is a 28mm tray for middling-large pieces, and tray 5 is a 38 mm tray for the biggies. Ex: The first piece has location 787; tray 7 is a 24mm tray {10x8 array}, in which piece no.1 occupies the seventh slot on the eighth row. With 10 rows, use 0 for the last row.
- **Diameter.** Always approximate with lead; in some cases you may need to quote a range. Millimetres are the standard unit. Don't bother with micrometer gauges and two decimal places! Even a modern milled coin can differ by 0.04mm if measured across twice at right-angles, so you can imagine the effect of doing it with crude lead....
- **Weight.** Grams are the standard unit, and this time two decimal places are relevant.
- **Obverse type;** i.e. as rendered by my classification system, which may be a hybrid in some cases.
- **Reverse type.** As obverse above.
- **Miscellaneous notes.** For use as you wish, but probably best employed for highlighting features.

Other fields worth considering are:

- **Condition.** Would be regarded as a must in conventional numismatics, but of less value with crude lead. More important on high grade, older or unusual pieces which you are likely to market at some future stage; less so if the piece is very ordinary, as the vast majority of crude leads are.
- **Date of acquisition.**
- **Vendor and price,** if piece bought rather than found.
- **Cross reference** to literature; in the case of lead, not much other than BNJ53/54 to refer to.

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| Ref | Provenance                   | Obverse description   | Reverse description   | Date | Col | Loc | mm    | gm    | O-type   | R-type |
|-----|------------------------------|---|---|------|-----|-----|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| 1.  | u/k<br>East Dean, Eastbourne | Parents and child, possibly dancing<br>HALF P(?)ESOS, S both retro, around circle<br>{1 of 2} | Two adults plus possibly a maypole<br>Uniface                       |      | 3   | 787 | 24    | 5.01  | 32       | 32     |
| 2.  | East Dean, Eastbourne        | HALF P(?)ESOS, S both retro, around circle<br>{1 of 2}  | Uniface   |      | 3   | 775 | 22-23 | 6.62  | 29       | 0      |
| 3.  | East Dean, Eastbourne        | HALF P(?)ESOS, S both retro, around circle<br>{1 of 2}  | Uniface   |      | 3   | 776 | 22-23 | 7.58  | 29       | 0      |
| 4.  | Thames                       | ID/1732   | Small plant, possibly in pot, 4 individual leaves<br>showing        |      | 5   | 777 | 23    | 9.81  | 2        | 17     |
| 5.  | u/k                          | Head of stag (?), 17-25 flanking, radial<br>dashes  | WG, radial dashes   | 1725 | 4   | 545 | 35    | 21.97 | 18       | 2      |
| 6.  | Newport, Essex               | Sprig, fl by 1/7, C/1, 7/1 on three levels  | Groat {i.e.three-circle} version of 6-petal & pellets               | 1771 | 1   | 475 | 25-27 | 7.24  | 17       | 1      |
| 7.  | Dorchester,Oxon              | Spade, 1755 below, various pellets around   | 6-petal   | 1755 | 3   | 611 | 20    | 5.19  | 27       | 1      |
| 8.  | Dorchester,Oxon              | Spade, 1755 below, various pellets around   | 6-petal   | 1755 | 3   | 612 | 20    | 4.93  | 27       | 1      |
| 9.  | South Oxfordshire            | Solitary pellet, strong rim, hint of link be-<br>tween the two                                | Uniface   |      | 2   | 791 | 18-20 | 3.35  | 30       | 0      |
| 10. | South Oxfordshire            | Irregular 5-6 spoke wheel, profusion of pel-<br>lets  | IC, multi-pelleted  |      | 2   | 792 | 20    | 3.50  | 3        | 2      |
| 11. | South Oxfordshire            | 7 pellets around central hub-pellet   | Uniface   |      | 2   | 793 | 18-21 | 5.29  | 30       | 0      |
| 12. | South Oxfordshire            | IR  | Sheep or calf   |      | 2   | 794 | 21    | 4.32  | 2        | 18     |
| 13. | South Oxfordshire            | Coarse near-grid within strong rim  | Uncertain   |      | 3   | 795 | 20-22 | 7.43  | 7        | 24     |
| 14. | South Oxfordshire            | RF  | Quartered arrangement of parallel right-angles<br>{dumpy}           |      | 3   | 796 | 16-17 | 6.57  | 2        | 12     |
| 15. | South Oxfordshire            | I-retro-R   | Fine lis  |      | 3   | 797 | 21-22 | 4.25  | 1        | 4      |
| 16. | South Oxfordshire            | Trefoil adaptation of 4-petal   | 6-petal   |      | 3   | 798 | 19    | 6.07  | 24       | 1      |
| 17. | South Oxfordshire            | Multi-pelleted uncertain  | Multi-pelleted tree   |      | 3   | 716 | 19    | 7.03  | 2        | 17     |
| 18. | South Oxfordshire            | I-retro-N/1778  | C-retro-C interpretation of lis                                     | 1778 | 3   | 717 | 21    | 3.75  | 28-2 hyb | 4      |
| 19. | South Oxfordshire            | M within two parallel grenetis  | Uncertain object  |      | 3   | 718 | 21    | 3.17  | 2        | 24     |
| 20. | South Oxfordshire            | Retro-curly-R   | Uniface   |      | 4   | 713 | 21    | 4.34  | 2        | 0      |
| 21. | South Oxfordshire            | IL, crosses at 9,12,3 o/c, small square at 6<br>o/c   | 1718, cross above, horseshoe below                                  | 1718 | 4   | 714 | 20    | 4.88  | 2        | 8      |
| 22. | South Oxfordshire            | Four parallel circles + rim, joined by 8 short<br>struts                                      | Uniface   |      | 4   | 715 | 22    | 4.23  | 31       | 0      |
| 23. | South Oxfordshire            | Large pseudo-sceat, X in centre, u/k letter-<br>ing around                                    | 2-3 parallel circles, slightly vague, joined by dia-<br>metric line |      | 4   | 712 | 20    | 4.59  | 29       | 34     |
| 24. | Lechlade, Glos               | W   | Approx. quartered arrangement of parallel right-<br>angles {thin}   |      | 4   | 778 | 25    | 6.96  | 2        | 12     |
| 25. | Lechlade, Glos               | Star  | Quartered arrangement of parallel right-angles<br>{thin}            |      | 4   | 788 | 24    | 5.93  | 26       | 12     |
| 26. | u/k                          | IA, pellet above & below  | Lis {formal, well-struck}   |      | 4   | 624 | 14    | 2.02  | 2        | 4      |