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 Please note that the old LTT editor@aol.com address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## The Passing of the Years

Herewith the other half of this year's communion token display from Rev. Thomas Burns' "Old Scottish Communion Plate" {Edinburgh, 1892}; this month dated pieces mostly c.1650-1710. The book has some most interesting details concerning both usage and production, some of which {particularly the latter, and its associated mintage and costing statistics} is of relevance to lead tokens more generally. The plan is to include extracts from this material in LTT later in the year.

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## Introducing the Pb6....

Those of you familiar with the small Roman copper series of the 3rd to 5th centuries may be familiar with the terms AE1 through AE4, used to describe the denominational value of pieces in an era sufficiently obscure that no-one now living has any totally reliable idea of what exactly they were worth. The old well-understood series of sesterius, dupondis, denarius, semis and quadrans had long since gone and, the replacement system of small change being inadequately discussed in literature, we are left to describe copper coin denominations in terms of diameter, as follows:

AE1:	>25mm
AE2:	21-25mm
AE3:	17-21mm
AE4:	< 17mm

In fact, the scale should probably have been taken one step further, if 4mm bandwidths are assigned as above. The most horrible 5th cent minims and barbarous radiates go down to 11mm frequently and 9mm on occasion, so probably we should have AE4 = 13-17mm and AE5 = 9-13mm. Our own English 15th and 16th lead hits similar minima, so Pb4 and Pb5 would not be unreasonable, if one were to adopt the same approach; I'm not suggesting we do, I am happy to use diameters. End of issue; surely nobody would be so stupidly impractical enough to go down below 9mm, would they....?

The Indian state of Travancore was notorious for the small size of some of its pieces, the tiniest of which just about hit this figure; one can imagine only the tiny silver slivers of 17th cent Russian kopeks getting close. One looks at them and feels glad not to have lived in a place where such ridiculous things were forced upon the population. Most of the earlier 17th cent main series tokens would be AE4, and they are small enough in the hand; pity our Londoners c.1500 with their Pb5s, but at least we never reached the excesses of Russia and Travancore. Or so I thought until I recently encountered the little group above, which just happen to come from Herefordshire.

They may look large on paper, but in fact the magnification factor is about 1.7; the small ones are around 8mm, the large ones about 9½mm. Probably, the latter are worth twice as much as the former. The design is quite fine and several of them are in moderately good condition, despite the dimensions. The design, a triquetra {three-legged figure} with varying degrees of forking at the end of the arms, is consistent in concept if not always in execution, and the quartet of pellets seems to be invariable. There are never three, never five; which other of our crude lead manufacturers would have been that consistent? In other words, considering their size, they are of a fair standard of manufacture. One wonders how such miniscule proportions would have tested the makers' skills. 8mm, might I say, would be Pb6!

The weights are greater than one might think; the big ones in the sample scale at between 1.13gm and 1.29gm, whilst the seven small ones all lie in the quite compact range of 0.56gm to 0.67gm. Those with a keen eye may also note a counterstamp on the largest one, depicting a plain three-legged cartwheel in miniature. For good measure, I conclude by showing one of the above pictures lifesize. Would you really enjoy using such pieces regularly?



## *The Variety of mid-17th Century Reverses: Type 19*

We continue here our discussion on the variety of subject matter types on 17th cent tokens, and in particular the contrast between the crude lead and main copper/brass series, as expressed in terms of Powell classification types. As previously stated, due to the small size of most pieces concerned, pictures in this sequence of articles will continue to be magnified 3:2.

### Type 19

The animals and other wildlife listed by Williamson as being depicted on the 17th cent main series are many and various, but generally fall into the following seven categories:

- Uncertain quadruped
- Domestic animals, including farm livestock
- Wild indigenous animals
- Wild overseas animals
- Mythological creatures
- Marine
- Insects



With the exception of the uncertain quadrupeds and the insects these categories are all numerous, the domestic animals particularly so. On lead tokens the proportion of uncertain quadrupeds is extremely high, by contrast, no doubt because of the much lower average skill level of the people who cut the dies; but, no doubt, one of the other categories, usually domestic animals, was intended. I cannot see the humble down-to-earth folk who made and used lead tokens having much time for the exotic, or for creatures beyond their own shores, even if they had ever heard of them; except, perhaps, where some fabulous creature occasionally appears on the family arms of some local landowner. Figs.1 and 2 illustrate the contrast, both of style and subject; Fig.1 represents the farm, Fig.2 {the Lion and Lamb, no doubt a business sign} the fanciful.



A further breakdown of the above categories as to what appears on the main series reveals the following:

- Uncertain quadruped: Various, that's why they are here....!
- Domestic animals: Dogs, cats; horses, sheep, cattle, goats; asses.
- Wild indigenous animals: Foxes, deer; rabbits, hares, squirrels, mice, hedgehogs, moles
- Wild overseas animals: Bears {predominant}, camels, leopards, monkeys, lions, tigers {lions usually go in type 25 if thought to be heraldic}, rhinoceroses, leopards, snakes; porcupines.
- Mythological creatures: Unicorns, dragons, griffins {these three most common}; pegasuses, phoenixes, griffins
- Marine: Dolphins {predominant}; eels, whales, pike, salmon; shells
- Insects: Butterflies, grasshoppers

Some of the animals in Figs.3-8 appear to have a higher degree of breeding than on their lead counterparts, but then if you were trying to get customers into your shop/pub then why not a little licence?



Imagine going into a pub called “The Moggy”. There are leads with clearly well-bred animals on them, but they are mainly gentry pieces of the mid-late 18th cent; there will be an article on them later. Figs.9-10 are examples of fish. The inn for which Fig.9 was struck is still there, now, in the 21st cent, and the fish, a pickerel, still depicted on its sign. Fig.10 is the piece of a known fishmonger.

One of the listed categories above almost entirely contain species which one would be unlikely to meet in the big cities, let alone the small towns and villages, for this was before the days of zoos and circuses reaching Britain. Another is purely fanciful. One must presume therefore that knowledge of such species had been learned from travellers abroad, and from tale-tellers, and that through their drawings and descriptions many of them had come to be chosen as distinctive subjects to appear on business signs, whether on pieces of brass, copper or lead. The bear and the unicorn appear over 40 times in Williamson, the griffin around 37, and the dragon about 25. Our example Fig.11, depicts a griffin.



“The Fox” is a common enough name for a public house {Fig.12}, but the solitary main series depicter of a rodent {Fig.13} is known to be a professional ratcatcher. In between, the rabbit might just be a viable business sign, the mouse would probably not; and where not, you are unlikely to see them on Williamson pieces. Traders, when selecting their signs, cared about creating positive vibes, even in those days.

Foxes and rabbits certainly appear on lead, and none of the other small indigenous wild animals listed would appear out of place. Business signs apart, I have already conjectured about the possible use of lead in connection with vermin control in LTT\_36. Such animals are probably the very types that 17th/18th cent pest control officers, if they needed to issue tokens, would choose {Figs.14-15}.

Figs.14-15 are of a size which suggests the mid-late 17th cent, with Figs.16-18 a fraction later. They are not enormous, just post-1672 farthing size. Here we start to get into the realm of the uncertain quadruped, mentioned earlier. No doubt they are mostly very common animals, but it can take some skill to recognise which! Needless to say, few 17th cent main series pieces are stylistically this bad.

All marine types are rare on lead; one would at least expect the odd dolphin, which occurs some 45 times in the main series, and which is the only common one. Fig.19 is a scarce example.

Key to 17th cent main series tokens:

2. Southwark 25, Lion & Lamb
3. Lond.2040, Nicholas Roys, nr.Newgate
4. Middx.23, Henry Butts of Chelsea
5. Wilts.15, Marlborough town piece
6. Yorks.228, Will Snary of New Malton
7. Middx.60, Ann Nicholls, Hackney

8. Berks.119, Reynold Thornbrough, Reading
9. Suff.200, Rebecca Boulderero of Ixworth
10. Oxf.158, Nicholas Orum of Oxford
11. Cambs.142, John Bitton of Linton
12. Warw.9, William Reynolds of Alcester
13. Wilts.184, George Godfery of Sarum