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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@powell18041.freerve.co.uk](mailto:david@powell18041.freerve.co.uk). Please note that the old LTTeditor@aol.com address advertised on some earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.



## A Chronological Miscellany, part 2

After last month's display of what were mainly 16th-17th cent London pewter pieces, we continue this month with some lead pieces of the same period which are probably of provincial origin, then move on to the late 17th cent and early 18th. The smaller ones are magnified 3:2, as previously.



Any lead which approximates to a main series 17th cent piece is attractive, and Fig.1's inscription immediately commends intention; it appears to be genuine, rather than filler. A small boat, or a shield, depending which way you look at it {I favour the boat} makes up the rest of the obverse; and yet, the reverse is as mediaeval as they come. Surely this has to be at least 16th cent if not 17th, despite the cross and pellets? Perhaps the would-be boat is a mitre, and we are looking at one of the later degenerations of the boy bishop; in which case, nice to think that we might have his name on it!

Square lead tokens {Fig.2} are rare, and the few I have seen usually have plain initials on any non-blank sides. In some cases their lettering is Lombardic, in some not, and I am incline to think their date range may straddle the time at which such lettering went out, in other words the mid 16th cent. To find one with the emerging designs on, however crude, is pleasant. It is of unknown provenance.



Fig.3 could be a tessera, but might not be. Strongmen wielding clubs are known in the 17th cent main series, and could well appear on lead. It depends on what you think the gent is doing, beneath the wear; if he is sacrificing, he is Roman. The style is good but, again, regrettably no provenance. Less well executed, and rather more pewtery, is the uniface cross-keys pieces of Fig.4; this is a Thames piece, just to illustrate that London did not have the monopoly of style, and is possibly later than it looks {end 17th cent?}.



Some delights for us in Figs.5-10, all of which are uniface. Fig.5 appears to show a bird or person holding forth, depending on whether you think that is a beak or not, at another man standing patiently on the right; although those of you with classical interests may be disposed to see an epsilon, the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet, indicating either that the piece was struck in mint workshop no.5 or the fifth year of somebody's reign. Sorry, provenance once more unknown!

Fig.6 is a full-blooded rose, with three rings of petals; the allusion being possibly to the issuer's surname, shop sign or allegiance... or maybe just that he liked flowers! It comes from the Lewes area. Fig.7 shows a fine quality merchant mark, but is not quite in the style of the London issuers; that inner rim marks it out, apart from the fact the merchant mark pieces are often two-sided. It came from a Kentish source, although I am not fully sure whether it was found there.

Fig.8 depicts an arrow, which is sometimes the symbol of an apothecary. It is extremely chunky, over 5mm thick, and weight 6.24gm, which supposes me to think that it is a weight. It comes from Blyth.

A nice heart {Fig.9}, probably from East Anglia, with a hint of grenetis above and below, hinting that this is not quite as early as its size might suggest. It probably only just qualifies for the 17th cent. The cock of Fig.10, probably from Nottinghamshire, is a fine rendering; a 17mm diameter, from before the stylistic fall, puts it fairly squarely in the middle of the main series period at about 1660.

MAGNIFICATION REVERTING TO LIFESIZE AT HIS POINT, AS PIECES ARE GETTING TOO LARGE



Some pieces are not what they seem at first glance, in terms of size and date. Fig.11, which comes from Herefordshire {not known for being particularly prolific in terms of lead}, has a decidedly pre-Reformation look, but is 21mm from top to toe. I will guess that it is an ecclesiastical piece of c.1500 or thereabouts, and that maybe the monastery or church concerned did its own thing. Following on that, Fig.12 is the opposite, a piece which hints at being early but which looks late. A figure "4" with seemingly meaningless lines added is usually a merchant mark, yet the style is not quite typical. Also, it feels as if it could be as late as the beginning of the 18th cent. Maybe it is? It is a Thames find.

Fig.13 is a "klippe", to quote the generic term; a piece which was made by repeatedly stamping out a die on a metal sheet, then cutting up with a pair of pliers. If you were a perfectionist of a manufacturer you cut round the design properly and filed it down so that it was the same shape as the stamp, usually circular; if you were lazy you just cut chunks with a complete design on each; and if you were totally incompetent you did it as Fig.13b above and didn't even bother about getting the whole design on the piece. The "klippe" phenomenon can be seen on the Bristol copper tokens of the early 1590s, on a few of the base metal tokens struck by James I's and Charles I's favourites, and on certain Swedish coinage of the early 17th cent. Notice here, however, another feature; the triad is upside down, which indicates that the date is likely to be rather earlier, perhaps 1620-ish, than if it was the normal way up. The interpretation is that the issuer was IP or JP, and that his wife's initial is given by the worn letter below. The provenance is possibly East Anglian.

Figs.14 and 15 show three anchors and another apothecary's arrow, respectively; the former is of uncertain origin, the latter from Hull. With a diameter of around 20mm, they are at least contemporary with the last years of the main series tokens {1663-1672} and possibly a little later. One anchor is common, a trio is not; when there are three of an object in this way, a trade guild meaning is usually indicated.



One of the features which the Williamson series introduced on a regular basis was edge beading, and whilst not invariably used on subsequent lead it is sometimes to be found. Fig.16 shows a good clear example from probably not too long after. Fig.17's finely drawn rose argues for an earlier date than the early 18th cent which the size suggests, and the style of the initials argues at first glance for an even later date than the size. I'd like to think that it is actually mid-18th cent and that there were then still some good lead engravers around; however, look at that chevron-bar on the A and perhaps we are heading back earlier again. The provenance of both these is unknown.

Two delightfully clear but simple depictions on Fig.18, a small sailing vessel on one side and a hurdle on the other; or possibly a porter's stretcher truncated because of the size, although I favour the hurdle. The size is that of a 17th cent main series piece but I think it is several decades later.

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We continue with several more fairly small pieces which are probably early 18th cent despite looking as if they might be earlier, for although some pieces certainly follow Pilson's Law {that token size approximates to that of the smallest coin of the realm}, it is clear that there were still quite a few who remembered the mid-17th cent brass/copper pieces in circulation and emulated them for some time to come; i.e. who did not follow the immediate move to 22mm diameter.

Pieces with varied depictions in each quarter are nearly always interesting, and Fig.19 is additionally unusual in not containing any obvious letters amongst them. The character bottom left is the nearest, although it looks more like an object. Bottom right looks like either a fish or a weaver's shuttle, whilst one of the damaged upper quarters could contain a bird. It is slightly pewtery, and Fig.20 even moreso. Gut feeling is that the Fig.20 could be more modern than it looks. It is a Thames find, and uniface.



Fig.21, slender both physically and artistically, is a good example of main series tradition being retained in an era when design was moving towards the rougher and chunkier; someone has taken quite a good bit of care drawing that plant. The provenance, unfortunately, is unknown. Figs.22-23, both from the Thames, give a good opportunity to contrast good specimens of mid- and late-17th cent examples of the same theme; the earlier, Fig.22, is as pretty as they come. Why, however, does the issuer of Fig.23 not use the other side to say who he is? Perhaps such pieces were used as anonymous love tokens for later engraving; copper coins are frequently engraved from quite early in the 18th cent, so maybe this was a cheaper option. I am very much aware that we have not yet got to the bottom of these heart pieces; some are clearly commercial, others might be love tokens, a very few are communion tokens; but it is difficult to place with certainty a common theme running through the lot.



Of unknown origin but looking rather Thames-ish, Fig.24 looks as if it ought to be late 17th cent from the size and style; however, the crozier is an object associated more with much earlier days. Perhaps, though, the object is a crook, and a secular rather than ecclesiastical shepherd is indicated. What though, of those two pyramids? An unusual device; perhaps we should interpret it as a mitre. My gut feeling favours staying with the late 17th cent, and construing the object as a shop sign.



When one gets a well-executed formal head as opposed to a humorous one, such as in Fig.25, the most obvious way of trying to date is to ask who, on the regal coinage, it most like. I reckon that is not too far off the head on James II's small silver Maundy. Any preferred suggestions? Another double-initialled piece; I must compare, sometime, the percentage of these seen on lead, compared with those in Williamson's catalogue of the main copper and brass series. Gut feeling is that lead has more, but it needs checking.

We move now to five pieces which illustrate the growing tendency, from about 1700 onwards, to use the single or double exergue. Figs.26-27 came together from a probable Sussex source, and may be by the same maker. The latter, whose dimensions are still of main series proportions, is the stand-out piece; some windmills are ambiguous., their would-be sails being confusable with a cross, but this one with the building as well is as clear as they come. Note that both Figs.26 and 27 have a set of retrograde initials, a feature which 17th cent copper and brass tokens almost entirely avoid, despite their earlier date; one of a number of signs that they come from a better-ordered or better-skilled manufacturer. Finally, I do rather like that banana on the reverse of Fig.26. I presume that that is not what it is meant to be, but a banana it is until someone comes up with a better idea.

Same theme, slightly chunkier pieces as we move on through the first decades of the 18th cent. Fig.28 came from an Isle of Wight source, although I am not sure whether it was found there. Fig.29 is another HA. Anyone notice how frequently HA and TC are occurring? I know I have mentioned it before but..... House of Alms? Town Coin? There are three TCs in this small group alone. However, change an issuers forename from Tom to John or James, giving the equally common IC {Fig.31}, and no such suspicion arises. I think that the HA/TC pieces where there is a second set of initials are those most likely to be the ones where charity distribution usage is indicated.



Fig.30, sadly anonymous as to provenance, is another piece which shows the willingness to use a very old design on one side and a thoroughly modern one on the other. The exergue is state of the art for the time when it was issued; the initials are more artistic than most, and if that is a 6 above them, we could be looking at an early example of a hop token which became more prevalent as the years rolled on. Turn over, however, and we see that the classical cross and pellets, and the grenetis, are alive and well.