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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](mailto:mail@leadtokens.org.uk) Please note that the old [david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk) address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery

One regular phenomenon which occurs on British lead is the appearance of pieces which seem to have a hint of both the 14th and 18th centuries about them, which leads many to think of them as mediaeval when perhaps they are not. Two such pieces have recently been sent in, as shown here.

Regarding Fig.1, a Surrey find kindly sent in by Andy Barr, the size, and the style of the reverse lettering {particularly at the bottom}, suggest 18th cent; however, the obverse feels more mediaeval. Seeing Andy's Scottish surname, I started thinking briefly of the silver pennies of Alexander II in the 13th cent, which use such stars with different numbers of points on to denote the various mints. Then I saw "Surrey" and realised that it was just coincidence!



I always enjoy seeing cross-depicting pieces which have something in the quarters rather than just being plain or pelleted. Two of the quarters of this one have stars; a third has either a crescent moon and sun {conjecturally an eclipse on occasion} or a pellet with surrounding annulet. All are found quite often on tokens. The object in the fourth quarter is either a letter I/J {J rendered as I at that date, and often middle-barred}, or a candlestick. The only possible common theme between the four quarters is "light". A monastery might conceivably use tokens in connection with the provision of candles, and very occasionally there are early pieces of 25mm diameter like this one. Clutching at straws, or not?

All the features of this piece are reasonable enough in isolation, but in rather weird combination. It is not that uncommon for 18th cent manufacturers to borrow the more basic of the early stock designs, because their simplicity renders them the easiest to execute, but in this case the maker has gone to an unusual amount of trouble on detail.

Fig.2, courtesy of Michael Miles, is a more basic cross and pellets; however, it does not have the fineness of execution of most mediaeval material; there are two pellets in some quarters and three in others, nor are they equally defined; whilst the arms of the cross are not at right angles, and one diameter is stronger than the other. Without



knowing the dimension of my correspondent's fingers, it looks more late 17th to mid-18th cent size, plus it is also uniface, which most of the early ecclesiastic pieces were not.

Also from Michael, but of a very different nature, is Fig.3. This is a Thames find, and has the thick arrow design traditionally associated with HM Government use, as for example on prisoners' clothing.

Without looking at the back it is the right shape for a badge, in terms of the symmetry, or it might even be a button, but there are no signs of any fixing whatsoever; in fact, it looks quite neat. The notch is not matched by anything which suggests function or design, so it could be an invalidation symbol; i.e. a bit of small deliberate damage inflicted to indicate that, whatever it was once used for, it is no longer current. That would normally apply to something which had a nominal value of some sort, i.e. a token rather than a small artefact. Readers of our LTT's new series of articles on European tokens will shortly learn that some continental prisons had their own internal currencies. Maybe we did too?

## Continental Counterparts, part 3: Mining

Our series continues this month with the industrial use of tokens, commencing with those relating to fuel. Fig.1 is a known peat token issued by a German salt factory in Braunschweig {Brunswick} around 1853, which is modern compared with most of the pieces under discussion. The word “Torf”, meaning “Turf”, is almost self-explanatory; the concept of the “Fuder” is less so. One wonders whether it is related to the word fodder, but whether or not, it is a weights and measures term which was widely and differently used throughout the German states. To summarise, without getting into the fine detail, it is either:

- ⇒ A container, into which coal, crops or some other commodity is loaded when extracted or picked.
- ⇒ A unit of weight or volume, as agreed within the local jurisdiction.

A good way for a British token enthusiast to look at it is along the lines of the 72 or 120 bushel containers used within the Kent and East Sussex hop-picking community.



The fuder was also a convenient unit of measurement in factories and in the coal industry. Figs.2-4 are part of a small group of tokens emanating from a group of mines around Stolberg-Wernigerode, in the southern part of the Harz mountain area of Germany. The initials on them should be interpreted as follows:

Fig.2 : IB / ½F = Ilsenburger Bergwerkes , 1/2 Fuder {of charcoal}

Fig.3: SB / 1F = Stolberg Bergwerkes, 1 Fuder {of charcoal}

Fig.4: IKZ / 1K = Ilsenburger {KZ=?}, 1 Korb

Bergwerkes = mountain works, i.e. a mine, whilst a korb is a basket, of size unknown. I can only presume that KZ represents some slightly different business establishment than a bergwerkes, possibly Kooperieren Zusammenarbeiten, or workers' Co-Op.

The Harz mountains were a major mining area, also, and in addition to the above uniface pieces there is an extensive series issued by some twenty-odd mines during the approximate period, if the dated examples are typical of the whole, 1660-1760. These are two sided and are based on a common format; initial(s) on one side describing exactly which mine, and a delightful wheeled railway wagon on the other, usually with date below. On the one shown, Fig.5, “W” stands for Wildemanns Fundgrube, or Wild Man’s Treasure Trove; no restrictions on what the finder called his mine, obviously! The Roman numeral presumably indicates some sort of quantity akin to the bushel; on nearly all other pieces in the series, there is simply a “1”, indicating one wagonload. Opinion is divided on whether M = Maass or Monat. The latter would indicate a month-dated piece; 5te and 6te {5th and 6th} both exist.



The mining tokens of the Harz mountain are one of the few token subjects covered in these articles which have been well documented in a book, to which I am grateful for some of the information above. Its author, Siegfried Elbeshausen, in endeavouring to describe the strange concept of tokens to an unfamiliar European audience, uses the phrase, “Ersatzgeldes: ähnlich wie in vielen Betrieben Englands und seiner Kolonien etwa zur gleichen Zeit” - translated, “replacement money, such as used in England and its colonies at about the same time”. Given that the time of the innovation was c.1660, he is mainly talking about what we know as main series 17th cent tokens, as described by Williamson. Who knows, he may even have known about lead as well!

There is also another small group of token-issuing mines in Northern France. Some of their pieces, such as Figs.6-7, are very simple; they just state the name of the mine on one side and the initials of the owner, or maybe the company, on the other. Presumably they had a single value, well-known to the locals, such as maybe payment for filling a truck of coal.



Those of the Vieux-Condé mine are more interesting; there are two separate pieces, similar in design except for one word: the reverse inscription says “Jetton d’Hercheur” on some pieces, {Fig.8} and “Jetton de Mineur” on others. “Mineur” is clearly miner, the man who does the cutting, whilst “Hercheur” translates as herder; of coal, or the pit ponies? Either he is the man gathering up the coal and putting it in the trucks, or he is the man looking after the animals, of which in those days there would have been plenty; but the point is, either way, that the hercheur would have been paid less than the mineur, and that some distinction of the tokens given would therefore be necessary when it came to redeeming them for real money.



Other mines’ tokens show numbers, and one is left wondering whether these pertain to a bushel-like system of volume measurement or actual monetary values. The Litry pieces {Fig.9} are known with various values: 10,12,15 and 18, if I recall, although I do not remember anything lower. One would expect a wider range of values, and less close together. Perhaps they referred to the different sizes of containers/baskets/wagons in use.



Are these value-bearing pieces later? Fig.10 is the only dated one, although Fig.11 feels contemporary, and I suspect that they are by some way later than, for example, those of Fresnes or D’Anzin {Figs.6-7}. Both come from L’Aniche, which like the issuers of Figs.6-8 is in department 59 {du Nord}. The “S” on Figs.10 is widely stated as standing for sou or sol, a view further enhanced by the fact that this extends to “So” on Fig.11; this in 1820 notwithstanding that the sou actually became obsolete in 1795. The term was, however, retained as slang for five centimes, in the same way as tanner over here was slang for sixpence and bob for shilling. It is interesting that L’Aniche was still using the sou in 1820; is it just possible that “So” stands for something else?

An interesting piece from the Mines de Montcenis, in the Bourgogne region of Eastern France, is Fig.12; uniface and of different style, with a “W” depicted beneath two interlinked “L”s. The latter for “Louis”, the king, no doubt, but “W” most probably for Wilkinson, the surname of a certain British engineer and industrialist known to have been linked with the development of the enterprise at that time. Where have we heard that name before... in connection with 18th cent tokens, perchance? There were two brothers, John and William, and the French headhunted William to help them, amongst other things, establish a foundry at Montcenis.



Sweden has a particularly large number of mining tokens, sufficiently so that one author, A.W. Stiernstedt, has written a whole book on them. Most of them are 17th or 18th cent, and a selection of them are shown above. They largely relate to coal, but it will be noticed that the Nissafors mining complex issued separate pieces in respect of coal {Fig.13} and limestone {Fig.14}. Most of them either state some quantity of work done, in terms of amount of containers filled, or depict said container; usually a wagon, sometimes a large basket. The name of the mine, or its initial(s), is often present, e.g. as on Figs.13/14/16, and less often that of the token's authorising officer {Figs.17-19}.

These are all features which one feels that one might encounter in simpler forms on lead tokens, so one must ask the question: did any of our mines of that period issue equivalent issues over here? It is known that Cumbria did, and in good copper, but that was no doubt down to the wealth of the land-owners and businessmen who ran it. There would have been other lesser enterprises in many parts of the country, whose need for tokens might have been very similar, but who lacked the means to fulfil it so ostentatiously. Is lead not the material they would probably have fallen back on?

So much for tokens issued by mines in connection with their workings; we will move on next time to tokens issued, both by mines and others, in connection with the truck system; that is, paying employees in company tokens which can only be redeemed in the firm's shop. Before we go, however, this strange piece from Béarn, in southern France, right down by the Pyrenees {Fig.23}. It is actually classified as an official coin, and appears in the catalogues as such under the title "Sol des Mines ou "de Béarn"". It is chunky copper, 27mm and 11.85gm, and the obverse is every bit standard coin; several crowned "L"s for Louis {XV}, employing an established regal design of the time. On the reverse, however, the inscription "PRODUIT / DES MINES / DE / FRANCE", in four lines, with date {in range 1721-28} below. Does that sound coin rather than token, and how many neat round flan clips do you get on official pieces? Maybe it doesn't belong here, but it feels as if it ought.



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As stated above, the only area in Britain where mines produced and used copper tokens at the same date as the pieces above {mainly 18th and early 19th cents} was Cumbria, and a selection of their tokens are illustrated overleaf. The most attractive of them show pictures of the mine workings {Figs.24-25}, whilst others show the monogrammed initials and/or family arms of their {mostly aris-

tocratic} wealthy owners {Fig.26-28}. Almost all have the names of the issuing mine on them. Occasional pieces also have values on {Fig.29}, indicating probably a number of wagons worth of coal, lime or whatever; their use being probably similar to that of the hop farms down the other end of the country, which similarly paid for labour on a piecework basis.



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However, we are all aware that Cumbria's mines are far from being the only ones in Britain, just as our earlier European examples probably represent only a small proportion of those in their own countries. So, did those other mines not issue tokens? They would, surely, have required similarly to pay their workers according to units of work done or output produced.

Perhaps, then, they did produce tokens, and we just don't know about them or can't recognise them. Lead would have been ideal for the purpose, and of course in some cases lead was the commodity produced anyway. They wouldn't of course been as quite as fancy as the fine Cumbrian designs shown above, but that may be simply down to the fact that their owners were of much more modest means or did not have access to such good manufacturing skills.

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What would such pieces have looked like? Fig.30 is a little-known token, halfway between struck copper and crude lead, which hints at what might be. Possibly Scottish, but not proven, it is actually copper, with part of its detail struck on to what looks as if it may originally have been a Georgian farthing. It is uniface, and the hammer blow which struck the "3" has left it somewhat scyphate, i.e. saucer-shaped. True, there is a name, D. Bristow, and a date, 1788, but in terms of style it feels part way to lead. Perhaps there are others out there, anonymous and even less sophisticated, which are the whole way to lead.



## Another Early Dated Piece

My thanks to a Nottinghamshire-based group called the Divvy Detectorists for sending in this early dated piece, probably 1600 but arguably 1606 or 1608, depending on how you interpret the protrusions on the top of the final digit. I haven't been told its exact dimensions, but the reverse looks as if it could very well come from the same maker as the 1604 piece shown alongside, which is 22mm across and 6.67gm, i.e. one of the small group of large-flan pieces previously discussed in LTT\_61 {specifically, page 3 and Figs.8-10}.



The two pieces diverge on their obverses, the Nottinghamshire one having a conventional initial triad, but unfortunately the 1604 one, which clearly has something different, is too poor and too vague to illustrate. Possibilities include a swan, a vase or font, or a candlestick; but whatever, it is not a triad. The first decade of the 17th cent is quite early for a triad but then, if you used a large flan, you had the advantage over those who only made their tokens 12-13 mm across.

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## A Lead Membership Piece



The piece on the left, 27mm and a very chunky 12.22gm, is clearly some sort of membership pass; for what organisation I know not, but its initials {GHHD ?} are spread out round the upper edge of one side and its arms appear on the reverse of the other. PE, between the upper initials and the hand, is probably either the president or the membership secretary, most likely the former. So, what sort of society is it?

The hand, hinting at a gesture of friendship, gives the clue; it is almost certainly some sort of friendly society, whose members work together to support each other. We have already discussed friendly societies a little in LTT\_118, but the tokens shown there were mainly 19th cent value-stated copper and brass pieces associated with either (i) subscriptions or (ii) drink allowances at the various meetings. I conjectured at the time that membership tickets might exist in lead at an earlier date, and I think that this one, which is unnecessarily thick and heavy for monetary use, is one such.

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## A Rather Unusual Communion Token?

Communion tokens were normally made of lead or, increasingly as the 18th and early 19th cents wore on, its later alloy, white metal. A few, maybe, in aluminium or brass just before the end of their era. They often had the names of the church and its officiating minister on.

What, therefore, are we to make of a Cartwheel twopence counterstruck with the name of a minister, "REV BENSON"?

Was he taking the highly unusual step of using second-hand coins as communion tokens, or did he have personal business interests elsewhere, or was there some other church usage? One previous owner of the piece was of the opinion that "EV" stood for Ebbw Vale and that "3" was a table number; however, I do not know his reasons and have not as yet been able to find any supporting evidence. Nor is South Wales an area where communion tokens were commonly used, other than occasionally when Scottish seamen visited its ports. Interesting!

