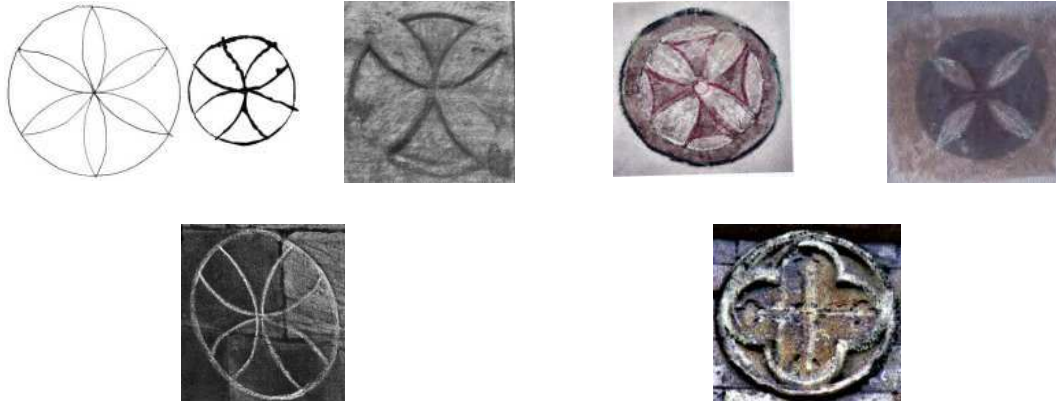


A free newsletter to all who contribute illustrations for use in the forthcoming book, *Leaden Tokens & Tallies*. To receive Issue Four of this newsletter you must send the editor at least one 300 dpi JPEG scan, or a sharply focused photo print, of any interesting leaden token in your collection. Send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

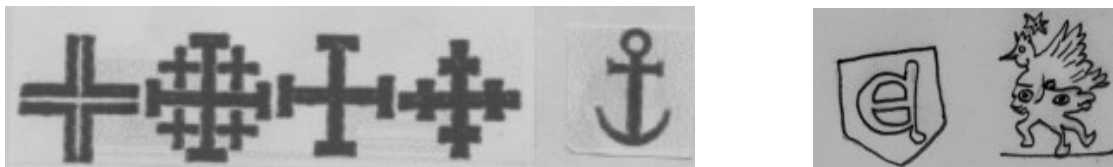
More Usage Research Here Are These The Answers To Our Petals Prayers?



My thanks to M J Cudford of Mount Publications who drew my attention to consecration crosses and “a report concerning two examples surviving as graffiti in Little Bradley Church in Suffolk, recorded in the Haverhill & District Archaeological Group Journal Vol. III, Number 3, 1984. The Journal quotes T.D. Atkinson, 'Consecration Crosses in East Anglia', PCAS XXVIII, 1905, who implies that such symbols reflect the rubric of the Consecration Service for churches. This would appear to offer one explanation for their significance.” This tip-off led me on an internet quest for further information about consecration crosses, beginning with a search for images that yielded more than a score of examples from as far afield as Scotland and Wales. (See above. The line drawings depict the graffiti found in Little Bradley Church.)

What were these crosses? Well, in the days before the reforming hand of Henry VIII dealt its savage blow, every newly built church had twelve large crosses inscribed within circles on its inner and outer walls. The arms of the crosses were usually formed by describing arcs with a stonemason’s compass. The bishop leading the consecration service anointed each cross with oils and performed other sacred rites. Later the crosses were often decorated in rich colours. Try blinking as you look at the cross at bottom left. One moment you see a St John Cross; the next you see a four-petal arrangement.

Bear in mind that in medieval times the church served as the equivalent of an art gallery; a visit to church (each villager went seven times in a week) must have made a powerful impression on the congregation’s visual senses. And let’s not forget that the local priest probably performed ceremonies to consecrate ploughs and seeds in the weeks before ploughing and sowing took place. Did he, or the peasants themselves, make similar consecration crosses by casting lead tokens and placing them in the soil? If so, then those consecration crosses on the walls of the church probably inspired the designs on the tokens. And lets not forget the pagan practice (still powerful in folk memory in those days) of making leaden sigils and using them to ward off ill-luck such as crop failures.



While seeking evidence for consecration crosses I could not fail to notice other crosses and emblems that once adorned medieval churches. Second from left above is a *Jerusalem Cross*. I wonder how many Type 7 grids and Type 9 irregular geometrics in our *fairly common* finds bags were originally cast as Jerusalem Crosses ? Fifth in the row is an *Anchor Cross*. I wonder how many we have turned up in ignorance?

The two figures at the end of the row also came from medieval churches; the first shows a guild emblem; the other some sort of medieval beast filtered through a medieval mind. Too late to illustrate came news of a lead token find near a Cambridgeshire windmill. It depicts the mill and carries initials and an 18th century date, both confirming the name of the miller at that time. He was using leaden pieces, perhaps as tallies.

David Powell On His Classification System

Type 2

What do those fascinating initials and numbers found on many lead tokens actually mean? Most are people's initials; a few may be those of places, or even measures of value.



One of the commonest forms is two initials; let us say AB standing for Abraham Bennett. If Mr. Bennett goes into partnership with Charles Davies, we may get a 2x2 array of initials in a square, which we catalogue as AB/CD. However, the display of one letter over two, A/BC, translates very differently; let us say, Benjamin and Catherine Andrews. Possibly Catherine has nothing whatsoever to do with how Benjamin earns his living; she just happens to be his wife. Not that ladies didn't run family businesses in those days; Williamson's catalogue of the tokens of the 17th century, records nearly 400, or about 3% of the total. A/BC forms frequently occurred on tokens during the main 1648-1672 English series; also on buildings, usually above doorways and with a date below, until well into the 18th century. My own 8th generation ancestor incorporated such a stone into his new farmhouse in 1758, but by then the heyday had passed.

In Durham, Northumberland, and north of the border, meaning is likely to change. Commercially used lead tokens seem very much rarer, except for the type of city pieces discussed in Dalton and Hamer. But there is another very large series of locally produced pieces, exhibiting similar wide variety of style, albeit for a very different purpose. I refer to communion tokens: 901 ancient parishes of the established church, plus numerous breakaway groups, all coining for their own purposes and to no commonly agreed standard. OK, such tokens are not money, and they are usually disposed of in a more reverential way than just chucking them in the ground, but many of the older ones (before the mid-late 18th century) would look quite at home anywhere else in the country. AB might still stand for Abraham Bennett, but he will more likely be a clergyman than a grocer or a yeoman farmer; the initial of his parish will probably be on the other side. A/BC might indicate that Rev. Bruce Cameron was minister of the parish of Aberwhatsit. Look particularly for an M in the three letter form, standing for Minister, e.g. M/BC, again with the parish on the other side; and a K in the second position of the two letter form, e.g. AK, standing for Aberwhatsit Kirk. Beware, this group below are all early 18th century communion tokens!



Either side of the border, there are single letter tokens; mainly, but not exclusively, older. The latter might stand for a parish (in Scotland) or a tradesman's surname, or perhaps even the name of an estate. Beware, however, the single letter B, for bushel, which occurs on hop and other pickers' tokens of quite modern date.

Even with three letters, however, you will be hard put to find many type 2 issuers in their parish register. The Williamson 17th century series nearly always has forename and surname; no such luxury for us. Be aware of the different naming patterns of the period, but even given a rare initial like K you will still be hard pushed. There weren't exactly too many Kens, Keiths and Kevins around 350 years ago. Does KAR, on the penny-sized 1646 piece shown, stand for Karolus (the king) or Carlisle (near where it was found) or neither?





One lead series which is plentiful in lettered types is that of Roman tesserae; mostly round, but sometimes oblong as per the FIL and IOR examples shown. After all, tessera does translate as *tile*, although it is used as the generic word for token as well. Yes, they did have tokens in those days!

Correspondence

David Algar of Salisbury & South Wilts Museum provided the LTT with information on leaden tokens in the museum's collection. He also asked if we are familiar with the classification system used by R H Thompson and M J Dickinson for the Norweb collection of trade tokens, and suggesting it "*would provide a very useful framework for lead pieces, some of which are probably early tradesmen's tokens.*"

David Powell replies:

The classification system referred to is that of Otfried Neubecker, pub. Munich 1974, and I did seriously consider it as an option; however, it has an extremely strong heraldic emphasis, and I adjudged it not appropriate for this series. It was probably written with the official coinages of Western European nations and their colonies predominantly in mind, and for those series it is ideal; likewise for 17th century tokens series of the main series, featuring as they do the arms of many guilds, it is still feasible. When one gets to cruder local coinages it is less so.

Neubecker starts with a top level of five main classes, Geometrical, Universe, Living beings, Plants and Inanimate objects, which he then subdivides into 77, 11, 114, 14 and 81 categories respectively at the second level: total 297. Robert Thompson and Michael Dickinson then expand these to a third level of their own in the Norweb work, to adapt to the particularities of the 17th century series, although I understand that this is not pure Neubecker. For them, this seems to work out quite well.

Robert Thompson has kindly supplied me with a copy of Neubecker's schedules, which he hoped (and still does, I think!) that I was going to adopt. Whilst I appreciate its value elsewhere, I cannot believe that the emphasis or granularity are right for crude lead tokens. Of the 297 second-level categories mentioned above, only six concern themselves with the crude lead types most commonly found, whilst about 130 threaten to map on to my types 16 or 25. How often do we encounter shields on crude leads, and how much detail is there on them anyway, compared with an official imperial coin?

Eleven of my types map very well on to Neubecker: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 22, 26, 29, 30 and 32. In another seven cases {14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23 and 27} Neubecker goes down to a degree of granularity which could, for example, be very useful if one could work out exactly what some of the animals encountered are, although looking at some of our lead pieces I would defy even an experienced zoologist to do so. He also includes a number of headings in these categories which we are unlikely to need; anybody yet seen a crocodile, llama, parasol or chandelier on a crude lead? Would it be helpful to have type 14 divided into 33 different types of cross, as in a book on mediaeval numismatics? That is the type of question which we have to ask.

It is on type 16 where Neubecker really excels himself; anybody out there dug up a tierced fesswise or a barry of ten or a fretty or a lion passant/rampant guardant recently? Neubecker kindly translates his German into English after a fashion, but it is translating the English into English after that which can be difficult. On the other hand, Neubecker has no time at all for our various geometrics {7, 9, 12, 13, 31} once they become non-heraldic, whereas petals {1}, dates on their own {8} and miscellaneous doodles {24} seem beneath his attention. Perhaps he was teetotal, because he doesn't seem to have any type 11s either.

I did contemplate subdividing my types but deciding against it, except with type 28 where the subtype is what the type would be if the outer band were missing {e.g. type 28.2 = letters within outer filled band}.

In keeping it simple, what I was trying to achieve was a classification which the ordinary collector and detector user could feel happy with, remember and get a handle on; where he could dig something out of the ground or the junk tray and say on the spot, "Ah, that's a type N", without having to go to his library and pull down a few tomes.

Have I got it right? Your call, I'll be interested to hear, so please feed back. If there is a large pro-Neubecker camp I am going to ask Ted to put a part of the schedules in LTT, so you can see it first hand. I might even add a quiz; I provide a few photographs, you have to identify which Neubecker category the pieces come under!

LTT Editor's comment: I took one look at Mr Neubecker's system and thought, what a pity nobody introduced him to a Fuji Finepix S602Z.

Recent Additions To The Archive



Can You Match Or Improve On Them?

Getting To Grips With Puzzling Pictorials



We learn much from David Powell's classification series every month; but enigmas abound, nowhere more frustratingly at present than in the animal kingdom where depictions on leaden tokens seem to have brought forth the Pablo Picasso in many a mould maker. A useful, though by no means infallible aid to identifying weird creatures comes with most modern PC's - the photo manipulation program. I've got the unsophisticated Paint Shop Pro 7, yet it allows me to turn images through 360 degrees; to enlarge them; to convert them very nearly to line drawings. Take that chicken-and-cleft-stick piece I mentioned in LTT2. With the aid of a pencil rubbing, a scanner and Paint Shop Pro 7, I've now managed to convince myself I had it upside down and it's really a bee, or a ladybird. But hang on, here's another piece showing a bird with a stick at one end of its anatomy or another. What do YOU make of it? Try these techniques on pieces in your collection, and tell us about the results.

No Tokens Or Tallies From Datable Contexts - So Far

A number of museums and archaeologists have communicated on leaden tokens and tallies in their collections. I hoped for news of finds from datable contexts, but no such luck so far.

West Berks told me they have 22 lead tokens dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. They "don't allow photography without a permit", so I'd greatly appreciate a local reader's feedback if he/she goes along to the museum (in Newbury) and takes a close look at these pieces. Record cards may reveal more about them. Wisbech Museum, Cambs, said they have "quite a number of lead tokens" and that a staff member is checking records for further information. This museum commented, "Your newsletter is most interesting and contains some useful information."

Salisbury reported that "32 pieces were published in the *Salisbury Museum Medieval Catalogue Part 3* (ISBN 0 947535 21 7). In addition there are one or two other examples and a collection of 42 hop-pickers' tokens, the majority of which are apparently of lead-tin alloy." Sound like a place worth a visit. Can a local reader help? I don't have a copy of that catalogue.

I was disappointed to learn that Tyne & Wear Museum - located in one of the best areas of the country for anchor (Type 5) tokens - has "only 1 token in our history collection ... [and] ... 5 tokens in our archaeology collection."

Whitby Museum also proved a disappointment. I hoped to hear of several leaden gaming pieces. However, the curator reports that they have only 1 leaden pub check "from Newcastle Public House, dated 1815 and bearing the name, A Proddy or Priddy, within a ring of dots." The museum also has a communion token from Whitby's United Presbyterian Church, Cliff Lane.

TO BE CONTINUED

Small Ads: Swaps, Contacts, Miscellaneous, etc.

NUMISMATIST ?

You can view back issues at 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
Phone: 020-8980-5672

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