

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 Please note that the old david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

"W" is for Wood, or is it for Water?

Tokens with single initials on are infuriating. Give us three, and there is room for the token to say something: they represent the issuer's forename, his wife's forename and the family's surname, as per the familiar triads, or maybe just surname, forename and location. Given the variety of things which they might stand for, this is still enough to secure the issuer's anonymity most of the time, unless one is very fortunate with chance clues from other sources.

Drop to two initials and our issuer remains even more of an enigma; forename and surname, or surname and place. But one initial alone? What am I to read into that? It doesn't feel enough for a personal issuer to be able to describe his business. So the most likely answer is that it is communal, maybe some local authority, and that the initial is that of its location, i.e. village or town. Another possibility, but still within the framework of a local authority, is that it stands for the name of some essential commodity, distributed as part of the Poor Law administration or in connection with famine relief.



The latter "W", often rendered as two overlapping "V"s, is a case in point; it is commonly found. Water we have already discussed in these pages quite recently {LTT_134/6/7}, but wood, the primary source of fuel in those days, is something which we have scarcely touched on. Tokens are known to have been used on the Continent for both wood and turf {Figs.1-5}, so why not in Britain as well? Figs.6-18 below show a number of possible candidates, although obviously without knowing which "W"s stand for what. They aren't the most attractive of pieces, on the whole, although if issued to paupers as relief by parish or municipal officers you wouldn't expect them to be.



The ABC of Categories



The pieces above are not lead, not British, and neither do they come from the same part of the world or the same century as each other. Yet they have one thing in common; they have a letter on them {A,B or C} which represents a category, rather than being the initial of any name or place. There are good reasons for this, which we will come to below, but in the lead token series we also have many pieces which have a solitary letter on them. The older of the two sets above dates from the 1860s; I do not know how early the idea of “category” denominations in lieu of a value would have occurred to anybody as a viable option, but is it within the bounds of possibility, given the diverse range of time and geography already represented, that crude lead tokens could have come within the range of such an approach?

For the record, the obverses of the two series are shown as Figs.1d,2d on the right. Set 1 is a set of modern Polish telephone tokens issued in 1990 whilst set 2 is part of a set of three Ceylonese {Sri Lankan} coffee plantation pickers’ tokens issued c.1866. The value of A,B,C is that they impart flexibility to a price list whose values may change with time.



Regarding set 1, the telephone tokens, I do not know what the categories represented; maybe A,B,C were for local, national and international calls respectively, or maybe they were for different time periods. In the case of the Ceylonese pieces we do know; A,B,C passed at 2¼d, 4½d and 9d respectively, these being standard prices paid for certain units of work. Another Ceylonese planter, Pilo Fernando, operated using the same values and stated them specifically, as per Fig.3, and very nice it is too to see the phrase, “Coffee Picker’s Chit”, appear directly on the piece; not very many picker’s tokens, in the British world at least, name precisely what they were used for. Yes, there are plenty of farmers’ names and initials on pieces, but the word “picker” does not appear very often.



However attractive and explicit his tokens, Mr.Fernando had a potential problem which the owner of the St.Sebastian Mills, which issued set 2, did not. Suppose that economics, politics or whatever determined that the rates for picking tokens went up to 2½d, 5d and 10d? Given that copper and bronze were the accepted metal for tokens in the society in which he moved, Fernando would have had to send back to Birmingham for a new supply, or at least counterstamp his old ones, whereas all the St.Sebastian Mills owner has to do is to post a notice at the mill entrance to the effect that, as from a certain day, his A,B,C pieces will be subject to a new exchange rate.





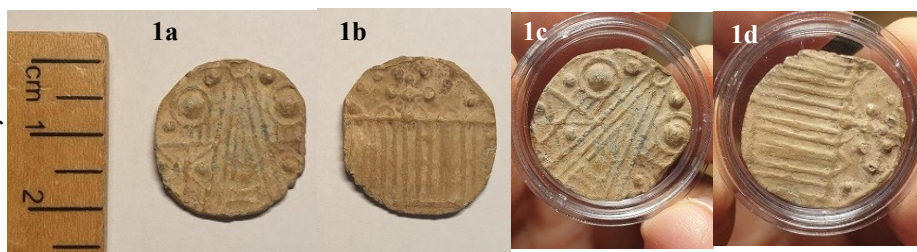
Figs.4-20 show a variety of single-letter British lead tokens. OK, a good number of them are indicated as being of quite early date by their size, and hence probably before abstract ideas such as categorisation were much in vogue; the paucity of information is forced upon them by their flan size, rather than by any other consideration. Quite a few have giveaway reverses, such as further initials. However, one or two of the larger pieces, when we get to the 18th cent, and especially if they have innocuous stock designs on the back, indicating that their issuers have no further information that they wish to convey..... could they not just be tokens of the type discussed? I suspect that it is on balance unlikely, but just worth a thought.

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Did the Anglo-Saxons have Lead Tokens?

Did the Anglo-Saxons make lead tokens; it is a question which occasionally gets asked, especially when a piece like Stephen Greene's Fig.1, which has been doing the rounds recently, comes along to stimulate it. Ask BNJ53/54 and they will tell you that the main British lead token series run, between them, from mid-13th cent to early 19th; plus, we know that there is a small series of special Norman tax tokens which had a specific function and are very different from the vast majority which were intended for local circulation amongst the populace {see LTT_63, page 2}. Earlier than that we know that the Romans had lead tokens back in their homeland and, who knows? possibly in other of their provincial dominions as well {those of you near Colchester or St.Albans who find any unusual designs, please take note}. But the Saxons? Well, there may be next to nothing identified as Saxon lead, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

Stephen inherited rather than found Fig.1, so the provenance is not known. It is quite large, not far short of 20mm diameter, and in case it helps I show it at two different angles.



Anglo-Saxon coin expert Tony Abramson agrees that the design looks early medieval, and observes that there are vague affinities with certain Anglo-Saxon coins, such as those shown in Fig.2-4,



but is not over-convinced that there is any significant link. He comments that the first side with the two roundels either side of the triangular device {Figs.1a,1c} looks a little like the Two Emperors type gold shilling with enthroned figures holding globes {Fig.2}, whilst the second {Figs.1b,1d} looks a little like the Series E (Low Countries) sceat of Fig.3 and the central motif on the Trophy type gold shilling {not shown}. Another example he quotes in similar vein is Fig.4, "an obverse related to the Vernus group, *Sceatta List 6-27*"; the latter being one of the reference books which Tony has authored, and to which I refer you if you want any further detail. Tony's conclusion, however, shared by one or two other well-known numismatists, is that he finds these resemblances superficial and coincidental, even though they may plausibly derive from a common source.

One might argue, also, that the two prominent ringed pellets on Fig.1 are reminiscent of the standing halo-clad heads on certain Byzantine coins of the same period.... or am I being too imaginative?

Readers' Correspondence



Continuing from the last page, Stephen, who also has an interest in old board games, has kindly shared several further pictures; firstly, Fig.5, an assorted set off gaming pieces, and next Fig.6, a board for playing the Viking game of hnefltafl, showing how such pieces were used. We have discussed such games and their tokens previously, in LTT_101 {pages 3-4} and LTT_123, but not before shown a board. Gaming per se is outside the scope of this publication, but there is a crossover between pieces which are so raised in the centre that they have to be gaming pieces, and those less so, with designs such as crosses, that they are ambiguously on the border between gaming pieces and tokens. Those shown here are more markedly gaming than those shown in the earlier articles, and the contrast is worth noting; as also, the fact that when they appear in quantity, you shouldn't expect them all to be of the same size! It is certainly the case with some games that there are senior pieces {e.g. kings} which may be intentionally larger than ordinary ones, and made as such, but pieces intended to be similar were, in those days, made in the



same manner as tokens and subject to the same vagaries of production.



Stephen's final contribution is another piece of even greater thickness; nearly 4cm in diameter, fairly uniformly convex on one side and flat on the other, and 1cm deep. {Figs.7-8} The three counterstamps, seen in Fig.8, each approximating to the design of an initialled late 16th cent token, are the authorising marks which give identification, and legal validity, to this as a weight.



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An Unpublished Hop Token on the Sussex FHS Website

It has recently come to my notice that Sussex Family History group have discovered the existence of a diary, kept by a hop farmer, Nicholas Oxley {1794-1833}, who had interests in several farms in and around Warbleton, near Heathfield, in the eastern part of the county. It covers part of the years 1814-1823, including the famous "year of no Summer" {1816}, and describes the life of a Georgian farmer in unusual detail. The society hope to publish it in due course, but in the meantime a summary of the story is available online, to whet your appetite, at <https://sfhg.uk/resources/historic/nicholas-oxley-diaries>. Included in it is a token not known to Alan Henderson's book, issued by Nicholas' son, Othniel Oxley {1821-1864}, which is at present the only denomination known. However, value series such as 1,3,6,12,30,60,120 {bushels} are quite normal, so, anybody round that way, keep your eyes open. Cowden, mentioned on the piece, and situated just over a mile ENE of Hurstmonceux, is one of the farms concerned.



Incentive Schemes, 18th Century Style

Back in the 1950s and 1960s an academic called Douglas McGregor introduced the idea of what he called the X and Y theories of human work motivation and management. The X-theory assumed that people are basically idle, self-interested good-for-nothings who require a kick up the backside every five minutes to get anything out of them, unless bribed, whilst the Y-theory took the more positive approach that humans had good qualities which could be developed, stimulated and encouraged to positive effect. Both concepts had been around for years in practice, of course; McGregor was just putting a name to them, and analysing the ways in which managers did or should respond.

The X-theory according quite neatly with the Church's idea of us all being fallen beings, it followed that both the Church and the institutions it permeated have tended for the most part, since time immemorial, to adopt the X-theory approach. The workhouse, to pick one example related to our lead token issuers and users, is an example; it was savagely authoritarian. Every now and again, however, someone, happily, decided to give the Y-theory approach a try. Maybe a limited try, but at least it was something.

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Figure 1, a copper piece 34 mm across, was issued as part of one such initiative. The centre of one side is engraved, and not that easy to read, so I will give you a description:

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|-----|---------|--|
| 1a. | Edge: | “Plenty and peace are the fruits of industry and subordination” |
| | Centre: | Plenty, emptying cornucopia; Peace, holding olive branch; beehive between. I{ohn}.Milton F{ecit}, in small letters beneath, is the maker's name. |
| 1b. | Edge: | “Society of Industry, founded 29 Nov 1783” {date in Roman numerals}. |
| | Centre: | “Third Rate / Premium / Thomas Carter / AEt 10 / 1802”, engraved in 5 lines. |

It is not immediately obvious who the Society of Industry is or what the function of the piece is. Is it a token or a medal? It is copper and has the particle appearance of a token, but there is a hole indicating that it probably once hung as a pendant. Let us investigate.

Taking side 1 first {Fig.1a}, the inscription portrays an ominous sense that the Society of Industry was an organisation keen to enforce the status quo and that Thomas Carter was not very far up the social scale, allowed whatever benefits the pieces conveyed on strict condition of Thomas being willing to tow the line. So, who was Thomas Carter? “AEt “ on the other side does not mean “After extra time”, as it might these days, but “Ætat”, meaning “aged”. Would a boy of ten have joined a trade union in those days, or joined a benefits society or paid an insurance premium? Probably not.

The engraving does not read “Third Prize”; it reads “Third Rate”, which doesn't sound very good either. There is another known example which reads “Fifth Rate”, which sounds even less prizeworthy. So, perhaps “Rate” does not actually refer to attainment. The answer is found in “The State of the Poor” by Sir Frederick Morton Eden {1766-1809}, an early writer on the subject of poverty and a pioneering social investigator, who informs us that the Society of Industry was the brainchild of one Rev. R.G. {Reynold Gideon} Bouyer, an energetic reformer, who during a long period in Lincolnshire was engaged in a variety of efforts at employing the poor in a way which promoted wool production and the worsted industry.

It transpires that the term “Rate” was a bit of misnomer, and would have been less ambiguously rendered “Category”, for what Bouyer actually did was to set up annual competitions amongst the poorer children, those home working as well as in the poorhouse, and there were ten different classes under which they could enter.. In effect it was a practical examination, with the classes determined by type



of work, age and length of experience, so that even the younger children had a chance to compete against their relative equals. With seven classes allocated to spinners and three to knitters, the prizes took the form of clothing, as per the chart on the right. Each X represents one unit, so that in the premier category the winners got two or three of certain items.

	Spinners of Jersey							Knitters		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Coat	X	X								
Waistcoat	X	X								
Breeches	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Shirt	XXX	X	X							
Stockings	XXX	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Shoes	XX	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Buckles	XX	X	X	X	X	X				
Handkerchief	XX			X						
Hat	X	X	X	X	X			X		
Medal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Was the medal a medal pure and simple?

Maybe it also doubled up as a proof of authenticity when the child turned up at the clothier to be kitted out, and the hole was added afterwards so that the child could retain the item as an ornament to remind him both of his achievement and the fact that hard work was worthwhile. As to the quantities issued, BNJ_53, which we often consult concerning early lead, also has an article on the medallist, John Milton, who made these pieces. It states {page 139} that in the first year of issue, 1785, 137 medals were awarded to the winners of “premiums”, as the prizes were called; fourteen plated examples, presumably for the category one winners, and 123 copper ones, presumably for the rest.

Eden’s “State of the Poor”, available online on Google Books, gives the rules of one of these competitions, signed by Bouyer, and a sample selection of them are shown below. Bouyer’s work was centred on five specific hundreds {administrative districts}, of which the main towns were Louth, Alford, Horncastle, Spilsby and Caistor. Eden, in the course of trying to cover the whole country, merely homes in on an example from one of them, on pages 408-416, for those who want to see the full rules or otherwise pursue further.

{Continued overleaf}

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Sample of the rules regarding the Society of Industry’s Examination

Regulations and Conditions to be observed by the Candidates for the Premiums above mentioned.

- 1, FIVE sets of premiums, each consisting of ten premiums of the respective rates above described, will be adjudged, at one meeting, to be had at Alford, in the course of the next Spring; and the distribution of the said fifty premiums shall be at Alford, in the beginning of May next the successful candidates from other districts being paid their travelling expences in the same manner as heretofore.
- 2, All the spinners of subscribing parishes shall be admitted candidates for any of the above premiums, without any distinction of district.
- 3, No spinner of jersey will be admitted a candidate for any of the first rate premiums, who shall not, within the months of December 1794 and January 1795, have spun 40 dozen of hanks.
- 4, No spinner of jersey will be admitted a candidate for any of the second or third rate premiums, who shall not, within the time above limited have spun thirty-six dozen of hanks.
- 6, No candidate, who shall have been a spinner more than three years, shall be capable of receiving a premium of a fourth, or any lower rate, in preference to any qualified candidate, who shall only be in the first or second year of spinning; unless such senior spinner shall have thirty dozen, clear of all deductions.
- 7, No one parish shall be allowed to receive two, either of the first, second, or third-rate premiums, to the prejudice of any qualified candidate of another parish.
- 8, Every candidate, who shall be convicted before the committee, of having been employed in jersey-spinning, during the time above limited, before seven o’clock in the morning, or after eight o’clock in the evening, shall be set aside, and forfeit every chance of a premium.
- 12, At the time of making the general returns of the work done in the trial months, complaint may be entered, by the employers, or any other person, against any of the candidates, for coarse or bad spinning; and such complaints will be referred to the consideration of the respective district committees at the time of adjudication.
- 19, Persons of skill will be employed by the committee, after the 26th day of February 1795, to go round to the qualified candidates, and to see each of them spin for the space of one hour precisely, taking an exact account of the number of hanks, leas, and rounds, belonging to each candidate, in such hour’s work; which account, with the produce of such trial, properly ticketed, shall be immediately transmitted to the chairman, to be laid by him before the general committee, and before the several district committees, when they shall meet for the purpose of adjudication.
- 20, The jersey spun before the examiners, shall be of the same wool, that was given to each candidate respectively in the trial months.
- 22, No person shall be admitted a candidate for a jersey-spinning premium, above the age of seventeen; if a sufficient number of candidates under that age shall appear.
- 23, No candidate for a knitting premium shall be admitted above eight years old; and the trial of candidates shall be made during the fitting of the adjudication committee, as usual.
- 24, If, at the knitting trial, ten country children shall appear as candidates, the whole number of 15 premiums shall be adjudged: but if a smaller number of country candidates should attend, then it shall be at the option of the adjudging committee to reduce those premiums to any number not less than eight.—N. B. By country children are here meant, those of any subscribing parish not belonging to the parish of Alford.

There was nothing, of course, particularly special which stood out about Lincolnshire's circumstances; it just happened to be the county in which Bouyer had influence. There would have been similar needs elsewhere, but only adjacent Rutland, whose society was active by 1787, seems to have followed suit.

The Rutland society's activities are frequently documented in the British Newspaper Archive, and it would seem that they also gave premiums for other meritorious activities, other than children knitting and sewing; on 5 January 1802 a London newspaper, *The Sun*, recorded a case of a premium, probably of a similar nature to the others, being given to a father for successfully bringing up a large family without parish assistance.

From *The Sun*, 5 January 1802:

STAMFORD, JAN. 1.

Last week Francis Bloodworth, a labourer of Pickworth, in Rutland, received a premium from the Agricultural Society at Peterborough, for having brought up eleven children without parochial assistance. The same man had before received two premiums from the Rutland Society of Industry.— We notice this as being highly honourable to the individual, and as a stimulus to the exertions of others in the same sphere of life.

The Rutland Society of Industry kept active until at least the 1930s and, whilst the nature of its activities probably moved somewhat with the times, the extract on the right reporting an extensive list of premium winners suggests that in 1900 they were still not that far removed from those of 1800. The clothing allowances appear to have been commuted for money, but that is the main difference. The list continues for much longer than illustrated, covering five premium divisions and occupying nearly half a newspaper column.

From the *Grantham Journal*, 21 May 1900:

RUTLAND SOCIETY OF INDUSTRY.

At a meeting of the Committee of the Rutland Society of Industry, recently held at Empingham, the following premiums were adjudged:—

Queen of the Sewers—Florence Jenks, aged 13, Stretton.

FIRST DIVISION.—*Knitters.* Emma Maddison aged 8, 3s., Cottesmore; Maud Jenks, 8, 3s., Stretton; Edith Wilson, 8, 3s., Stretton; Hilda Rouse, 8, 3s., Market Overton; Evelyn Pollard, 7, 3s., Market Overton; May Whittle, 7, 3s., Market Overton; Mabel Burnell, 7, 3s., Market Overton; Elsie Newell, 6, 2s. 6d., Cottesmore; Alice Fountain, 6, 2s. 6d., Cottesmore; Gertrude Came, 6, 2s. 6d., Market Overton; Annie Preston, 6, 2s. 6d., Market Overton; Rosa Stafford, 5, 2s., Cottesmore; Fanny Tidd, 5, 2s., Cottesmore; Eleanor Glenn, 5, 2s., Stretton; Eliza Presgrave, 5, 2s., Market Overton; May Stubbs, 4, 1s. 6d., Cottesmore; Agnes Earp, 4, 1s. 6d., Cottesmore; Ethel Tomblin, 4, 1s. 6d., Cottesmore; Florence Welsh, 4, 1s. 6d., Cottesmore.—

Sewers. Florence Jenks (Queen), 13, 15s., Stretton; Minnie Culpin, 13, 7s., Stretton; Eliza Tomblin, 12, 7s., Cottesmore; Fanny Knott, 12, 5s., Stretton; Mary Gutteridge, 13, 6s., Stretton; Harriett Tidd, 12, 4s., Cottesmore; Edith Tomblin, 11, 4s., Cottesmore; Beatrice Meadows, 12, 4s., Cottesmore; Louise Quin, 13, 4s., Clipsham; Mary Thraves, 11, 4s., Stretton; Harriet Grant, 13, 4s., Cottesmore; Annie Marriott, 11, 4s., Cottesmore; Mary Claxton, 13, 4s., Market Overton; Lizzie Simmonds, 9, 4s., Cottesmore.—O. E. ELLWOOD, Inspector.

SECOND DIVISION.—*Knitters.* Sarah Steel, aged 8, 3s., Hambleton; Ettie Kirby, 8, 3s., Wing; Maggie Harris, 8, 3s., Kdithweston; Lucy Parker, 8, 3s.,

So, what of England's other 38 counties, many of them similarly rural, who would have had a similar motive to keep their poor "off the parish" in some constructive manner? Did they have similar initiatives? Bouyer's venture happened to coincide with that stage of the industrial revolution when copper tokens were just starting to come into fashion and their manufacturers readily available, and when events regarding ordinary people, rather than just the upper echelons of the British world, were starting to be recorded in the press. What would have happened if he, or another like-minded person, had started a similar project some years earlier?

It would, I suggest, have been rather less publicised, and if it employed tokens, they would probably have been made of lead rather than copper. There are plenty of lead tokens out there from the earlier 18th cent; who knows whether, perhaps, a few of them might have been for this purpose? A medallic keepsake in lead is too difficult to imagine, and indeed feels too far-fetched for presentation to peasantry even in Bouyer's day; but the idea of a prize token which one presented at the local town's clothier in return for goods, as one did at the baker for bread, is much more viable. No record of it, but who knows?