

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Please note that the old david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk address advertised on earlier versions of LTT is no longer active.

Readers' Correspondence

My thanks to all this month's contributors for producing some very interesting pieces; mainly 18th cent, but herewith to start a couple of "what-is-going-on-here" 17th cent examples {magnified 3:2} to ponder. Anybody who thinks they have the answer to our enigmas, please write in!



Jamie Mackenzie's Fig.1 is typical of the 1630-50 period, although it might be as late as 1665. The initials I and S are a pain; both read the same either way up, so you don't know which way round they should be, and in addition I is also used for the more common J. Should it be rendered as in Fig.1a or Fig.1b? A clue; the pellets are a common feature of this issue, as are the triads, with the two normally flanking the surname initial at the top and the one between the forename initials below. So, probably 1b rather than 1a. However, is there anything between the a pair of pellets or not.? If a surname initial, one would expect it to be larger than the forename one below. Maybe it is just a doodle, in which case we have a simple pair rather than a triad and revert to our original quandary. The reverse depiction is interesting, for a totally different reason. There is a hint of Roman about it, but the other side says it isn't. It will either indicate the issuer's trade or be his shop sign, but it is a little too worn for easy interpretation. It comes down to what the guy is carrying and holding. Any ideas?

Fran Sibthorpe's Fig.2 is of rather less standard design, although of the same period; a single initial I within a ring of what might just be ornamentation, but could be objects; There is one down the right hand side which could be something like a pipe or a mallet; the first potentially indicating a tobacconist or publican, the second a craftsman.

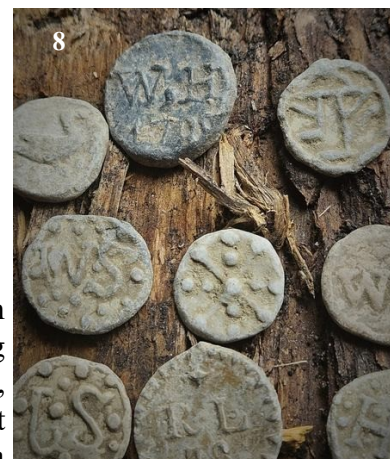


Moving on in time, Ross Willis' Fig.3 has a strange sense of feeling 17th cent on one side and 18th, or even 19th {surely, it can't be} on the other. It is fairly small, maybe about 18mm. The uniform looks far too modern, although admittedly its detail is fairly hard to see. It certainly doesn't feel agricultural, and even commercial feels like stretching it a bit. Ross enlightens: it was found 200 yards from a farmhouse in a village called Eastgate, Co. Durham, so named because it was formerly the location of the east gate to the hunting grounds of the Prince Bishops of Durham. So, we have an estate piece, and the gent depicted is probably one of the senior house servants, probably the liveried manager charged with supervising the coming and going of supplies. The private hunting park of the Prince Bishops of Durham was second in extent only to the royal hunting park in the New Forest, so it would certainly have required some significant administration, of which this token was undoubtedly a part.

More typically 18th cent is Julian Spiby's Fig.4, although unusually pewtery and well-cut for a rustic piece. There is a pleasantly neat and symmetrical rendering of the peacock, and the engraver is teasing us as to whether the middle bit is background foliage or part of the bird's plumage. Rather dark, but beautifully executed.



Another somewhat mysterious piece is Andy Hardie's Fig.5, found in the small village of Clarbrough, in North Notts. It is fairly small, only about 18mm at the widest {for which reason I have magnified it}, and has the hint of a Jewish plumma about it; except, there is no Hebrew script. These pieces with a few letters in circular arrangement on an otherwise open field not confined within an outer border, are an unknown quantity, so please write in if you find any more. Another small series which sometimes favours that style are the Huguenot méreaux, as their church tokens are called; however, that feels as unlikely as a plumma in Nottinghamshire. Maybe we are reading too much into it and the initials are those of a couple of business partners whose engraver couldn't carve straight.



Figs.6-7 come from a selection of pieces {Fig.8}, sent in by Simon Weller. Their very neat lettering, coupled with the styles of pelleting and beading, all suggest that they came from the south-east; and indeed, so it proved, when Simon confirmed a findspot of Wilmington, in East Sussex. The animal on Fig.6 is a bit scraggy; I'll take a guess that it is a fox, although my proofreader favours a hog. If a fox, the piece might have something to do with Vermin Act payments {see LTT_36}, and either way a shop or pub sign is a possibility. I think the obverse reads RL/JS rather than RL/18 {or 12}, i.e. two sets of initials rather than one plus a value; if a Vermin Act piece, the initials are likely to be those of the authorising parish officer(s). Although in East Sussex, Wilmington is a little west of the main hop token locations.; one would not expect to find a fox on a hop token, nor is 18 a value often used. One might debate whether Fig.7 is a hangman token {see LTT_60 page 4} or whether a mere pair of initials is intended.



One piece whose obverse looks like a Kent/Sussex hop token but isn't is Carly Dougan's Fig.9, which in fact comes from Scales, Cumbria, at the other end of the country. We wrote about the traditional Kentish format {Figs.10-13} and its evolution back in LTT_76, and about how the field was divided into two by a line across its diameter with detail above and below; typically, issuer initials above and value or date below. Carly's piece shows "SCAL" {abbreviated placename} above and issuer initials, probably MA below. Is it a token or a weight, she asks? and what are those squiggles on the back? Read the latter carefully; they may not just be gibberish, and indeed one of them does look rather like a "3". Three units, or thirty-something? Probably. A weight would be most appropriate, given that the piece comes from a place called Scales; however, Scales is in mining country, and the piece is more likely a mining token, along the lines of some of the cruder pieces discussed in Michael's Finlay's Cumbrian book, discussed in LTT_157.

Finally this month, a nice couple of robust look-and-enjoys from Russell Edgecock {Fig.14} and Craig Linley {Fig.15} respectively. Typically halfpenny sized to give their manufacturers more space to work with, these pieces come from that mid-18th cent period when designers were letting their artistic imaginations run high and compounding existing lead token design themes to interesting effect.. As to what Fig.14 actually depicts, suggestions welcome!



Tokens Associated with Early Peace Initiatives

In the early 1840s there were a growing number of peace movements, throughout the world, who were concerned that the major wars which had affected their countries in recent decades should not be repeated. They believed that by encouraging conversation and cooperation between communities whose parent countries had been at war, better relations would be established and the chance of future conflicts reduced. To this end they instituted two major initiatives: The International Peace Congresses, and International Friendly Addresses.



International Peace Congresses were top-level events where representatives came from all over. The first was held in London in 1843, and followed after the French Revolution of February 1848, by six more: Brussels in 1848, Paris in 1849, Frankfurt in 1850, London in 1851, Manchester in 1852 and Edinburgh in 1853. Sadly the Crimean War of 1854-58, followed by the American Civil War of the early 1860s, put paid to them.

International Friendly Addresses were a more local effort and were effectively the precursors of modern town twinning. They were aimed at developing good relationships between a pair of towns or cities situated in different countries, typically Great Britain and France. The first of the two newspaper extracts below discusses the concept generally, and lists a number of the known pairings {shown also on the right}, whilst the second is a local report of the Leeds-Lille connection more specifically.

Sample pairings:

- ⇒ London - Paris
- ⇒ Edinburgh - Paris
- ⇒ Dublin - Paris
- ⇒ Glasgow - Paris
- ⇒ Liverpool - Lyons
- ⇒ Leeds - Lille
- ⇒ York - Rouen
- ⇒ Bristol - Toulouse
- ⇒ Plymouth - Toulon
- ⇒ Chatham - Cherbourg
- ⇒ Birmingham - Bordeaux

FRIENDLY ADDRESS TO FRANCE.
Our readers will remember that during the last four years the friends of Peace have held an Annual Congress at this season, for the purpose of developing and propagating the principles which they justly regard as so essential to the welfare and progress of all nations. Circumstances have induced the Committee to intermit the Congress for the present year, but other steps have been taken to keep alive the interest of our Continental neighbours in the question, and to strengthen those sentiments of international confidence and goodwill which constitute the best and surest guarantees for peace. A number of Friendly Addresses have been prepared in many of the larger towns in this country to the citizens of similar towns in France. Thus, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and Glasgow have addressed Paris; Liverpool has addressed Lyons, Birmingham Bordeaux, Leeds Lille, York Rouen, Bristol Toulouse, Plymouth Toulon, Chatham Cherbourg, &c. &c. About fifty of these Addresses have been placed in the hands of Elihu Burritt, the well-known advocate of Peace, who is now engaged in presenting them to the Authorities of the various towns included in this friendly mission. We perceive by the journals that Mr. Burritt has been received with the utmost cordiality in Paris and elsewhere, and the objects and spirit of the movement are very favourably commented upon by the leading organs of the Paris press. The fol-

FRIENDLY INTERNATIONAL ADDRESSES.—LEEDS AND LILLE.—The Mayor (John Hope Shaw, Esq.) has forwarded to us communications which he has recently received from the Mayor and Municipal Council of Lille, in reply to a "Friendly Address," forwarded to the citizens of Lille, and signed by several of our influential townsmen. It will be remembered that the plan of Interchanging friendly international addresses originated during the dispute with the United States about Oregon, when Leeds addressed New York in a missive signed by our principal authorities, clergy, and mercantile firms. This is the second time that occasion has been taken to forward a similar address to Lille. We have been informed that the present one was placarded on the walls of that city, and elicited much gratifying comment. We have not room this week for either the address or reply. The address points out some of the advantages of France and England being at peace with each other—advantages in which both nations are alike concerned—and earnestly assures the inhabitants of Lille that the inhabitants of Leeds strongly desire a continuance of that peace which now prevails. The reply declares "that Lille accepts, with the liveliest sympathy, the warm professions of esteem and friendship contained in the address from the inhabitants of Leeds, and unites with them in giving utterance to the earnest wish that a long period of peace may strengthen and render for ever indissoluble the bonds of cordial and sincere affection, which should unite two nations so well circumstanced to appreciate and love one another."

From Fig.1 above it would appear that tokens were issued; whether as entrance tickets to events or as reminders-cum-souvenirs after them is uncertain, but if they were issued in one case they are likely to have been issued for others as well, and from what is said in the left-hand extract {Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 13 September 1852}, there could be as many as fifty of them. Moreover, these are likely to come from all over the country, which means that one might discover them virtually anywhere. Fig.2 shows another piece in rather similar vein, and of similar metal, again with clasped hands. Its provenance is uncertain, but "PA" might reasonably stand for Paris {the 1849 conference venue}, Pennsylvania {location of a local peace movement}, or the initials of two towns involved in a pairing. Any more similar sightings, please report.



Bryce Gillies of Dumfries: A Lead Token Maker Identified?

If the issuers of lead tokens nearly always manage to maintain their anonymity, through paucity of evidence to identify them, the manufacturers achieve it even more so. Few of the makers will have kept any written records, and even fewer of those will have survived. If you think any of your tokens are scarce, just remember that the survival rate of paper is much, much lower than metal. Then, ponder the odds for any particular piece of paper. You get the gist?

With certain material there is just a slightly higher probability. In the world of church communion tokens {CTs}, there are certain known commercial manufacturers who were responsible for many of the 19th cent white metal pieces and sometimes left their names on them; notably Crawford and Cunningham in Glasgow, and Kirkwood in Edinburgh. What about the earlier days, however, when CTs were in pewter and, just very occasionally, in pure lead?

The pewterers and hemmermen, as they were often known, had their professional guilds, there are books about them, and no doubt a certain number of our CT makers feature amongst their lengthy lists. A number of them will have made CTs, most of them not.. But how does one pick them out from the crowd? We also have newspaper adverts; many pewterers advertise their businesses, but only rarely does one plead guilty to manufacturing CTs; and when he does, it appears insignificantly in the middle of a long list of his trade's many facets, as per James Wright's advert from the Caledonian Mercury of Wednesday 15 January 1783 {Fig.1}. As to which of the 7000-odd known CTs James Wright made, however, no idea.

1 Candle-Moulds and other Pewter Work.
JAMES WRIGHT, PEWTERER,
 Cowgate-head, Edinburgh,
 Takes this method to inform the public and his friends, that he makes and sells the following Articles, wholesale and retail, viz.
 Candle-moulds of all sizes, or repairs them—Hard Metal Table-spoons—Soup, Turken, and Punch Ladles—Tea and Childrens Spoons—Market and Pistol Balls—Leads and Meals for Damask Weavers—Church Tokens, &c.
 Also makes the following Articles, in Imitation of Silver :
 Sacrament Cups, Screwed Pepper and Mustard-Boxes,
 Vafe Tea Pots and Flats, Tea and Table Spoons,
 Vafe Sugar-bowls and Cream-pots, Egg Cups,
 Sugar-bowls and Cream-pots with Signa Watches for Watchmakers feet, Windows, &c. &c. &c.
 Sals with feet,
 Besides the vafe tea-pots above mentioned, he also sells London ones of an inferior kind, and every other article in the pewter branch.
 J. Wright thinks it unnecessary to use any further solicitations to those who have formerly favoured him with their custom, as they well know the above articles are equal to any done in this country, particularly the candle-moulds, which were first made in Scotland by his father many years ago, and which he has now so much improved, that they have been found, upon trial, to be preferable to any brought from England.
 N. B. Commissions from the country, directed as above, will be punctually answered.

One of the possible sources for engraver information is the Scottish Book Trade Index {SBTI} which, in the words of its own website { <https://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index/> } lists the names, trades and addresses of people involved in that line of business in Scotland up to 1850, including printers, publishers, booksellers, bookbinders, printmakers, stationers, and papermakers. There is a certain overlap between the processes of book and CT production, in that both required engravers and that some of the latter had their fingers in both pies. With this in mind, I looked for people who might be the only engraver in their town, or one of very few, and whose town or area was associated with CTs of a particularly local characteristic. One such candidate ia a certain Bryce Gillies of Dumfries, whom I believe was probably the maker, or inspiration for, the distinctive group of pieces illustrated in this article.



Illustrated, right:

Obverse and table-numbered reverses for: the parishes of:

2. Dumfries North
3. Morton
4. Troqueer

The CTs of Dumfriesshire in the second quarter of the 19th cent and of Northern Fifeshire in the early -mid 18th cent are probably the two standout groups of attractive pieces located away from the big cities, and are represented by a dozen or more different parishes apiece.



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The SBTI records that Bryce Gillies is listed in directories as an engraver trading at 89, High St, Dumfries between 1820 and 1837, to which Scotland's People and various other websites add more. Bryce Gillies was bapt. 11.4.1784 at Dumfries, the son of Robert Gillies, described then as a roadmaker, but originally from Troqueer and latterly a farmer at Coplandhall, Terregles, both just over the border in Kirkcudbrightshire. Bryce was apprenticed to James Glover, a local saddler {note, a saddler}, on 15.4.1799. He married in 1813 at Buittle, Kirkcudbrightshire, and his wife Janet produced two sons Robert {1814} and William {1816}, both baptised at Dumfries shortly after. Robert junior subsequently followed his father into the family business.

Saddler? How did that sit with engraving? Yet, the 1841 census shows son Robert also as a journeyman saddler, still in the family home and in 1851, after his parents death as "engraver & copper plate printer"; which latter profession, he seems then to have remained in until his retirement., sometime before 1891. If father and son both followed the same professional course, that rather implies that saddler to engraver, with metalwork a common feature, was, if to us a rather surprising, natural progression.

From the Dumfries and Galloway Standard of Wednesday 13 December 1848:

Here, on the 5:h instant, Janet Kelly, wife of Mr Bryce Gillies ; and on the 10th instant, Mr Bryce Gillies, engraver—both of consumption, deeply regretted.

Now to the tokens themselves, of which examples from twelve parishes, all in the county of Dumfries-shire, have already been shown. Their essential qualities, apart from their distinctive style, are:

- ⇒ In terms of metal, they feel half way between the lead/pewter pieces of the 18th cent and the light white metal CTs of the 19th, not quite fully belonging to either subseries. They are usually quite light in colour.
- ⇒ They have smaller faces, but greater thickness for their size, than the majority of CT issues.

This last is their standout feature, and nowhere is it more enhanced than in the delightful round chunky pieces of Glencairn {Fig.14 below}, which when placed in the hand feel like weights.



Bryce Gillies was engraving in Dumfries from soon after his marriage in 1813, if not before, but the dated pieces in these distinctive styles seem not to start until about 1828. Figs.2,4,6 and 11 all bear dates not much after that and one wonders whether that might have been his first basic default design. Figs.3 and 6 are similar, but with blank centres; interestingly, the Morton pieces have an added date {1841} on the pieces with higher table numbers, but not on the lower ones. Perhaps increasing congregations forced the elders to go back for a further order.



The other main design, involving crescents and flourishes, seems also to have some fairly early representatives, e.g. Thornhill {Fig.12} and probably flourished alongside. Gillies, however, was versatile, and well able to accommodate the preferences of his various ecclesiastical clients, often proving able to work his own style into theirs. Above, Dunscore's Fig.15 is arguably a variant on Glencairn's {Fig.14}, whilst Lochmaben's Fig.16 seems to combine the Gillies flourishes with the lesser thickness of flan typical of other parts of the country. The metal quality feels a little different from most Gillies pieces, and the state of the end-product slightly less attractive in consequence, so possibly another maker is trying to copy Gillies' designs.

Countrywide, there was a penchant for verses on CTs, a feature which Gillies did not by default accommodate; but not to worry, it could be arranged; Tundergarth's Fig.17 combines a Gillies obverse with a very typical Kirkwood reverse design, whilst Holywood's Fig.18 goes even further and works in typical Kirkwood {Edinburgh} shape and dimensions as well. Nor was Gillies troubled by denominational differences; St.Mungo's Fig.19 is an Epsicopalian {Church of Scotland} piece which looks very Kirkwood on both faces but which, if you study its third dimension and hold it in the hand, feels very Gillies to the touch.



Fig.20 dates from just after Bryce Gillies' death, so is potentially is by his son Robert. The sequence of typical Gillies pieces then appears to come to a halt, although Fig.21, issued by one of the family's earlier customers, Troqueer, in 1875, seems to retain some of their typical style and texture. Finally, two pieces with a hint of Gillies from the other side of the country {Figs.22,23}; designers travelled, and saw and admired each others' work, leaving us to wonder who drew inspiration from whom.

An article in the Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society {3rd series, Vol.75, 2001, page 177-180} mentions Bryce Gillies in connection with the engraving of medals and other presentation pieces for a local shooting competition. There is documentary evidence that he performed this service in 1821 and 1828, and it is strongly suspected that this piece of 1831 {Fig.24} is his work as well. My apologies that shiny silver does not photograph as well as dull lead, and that the picture is therefore marred by reflection; however, I think that enough of it is visible to get the general drift, and I invite you to compare its various ornamental flourishes with those of the tokens shown previously.

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The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland {PSAS} website contains an interesting article in vol.14 {1879-80}, page 163-169, which contains a small section about the metallurgy of CTs, reproduced below. It is a pity that no member of the Dumfriesshire or Fifeshire groups are included amongst the examples listed, for both tend to be considerably lighter in colour than most pewter CTs; nevertheless, it serves to illustrate the wide variety of lead-to-tin ratios which are encountered amongst pewter CTs. Examples of some of the pieces mentioned, taken under similar lighting conditions, are shown alongside.

The metal of which the earlier tokens were made was lead, and from the year 1700 to 1745 this metal was almost exclusively employed, and until the year 1800 is commonly met with. In the west of Scotland more particularly tin was mixed along with the lead. The tokens made of the mixed metals are in a fair state of preservation, retaining most of the sharp lines. By means of this alloy a more durable and fast impression was obtained than could be hoped for from a soft metal such as lead, and at the same time the colour is changed from a dull blue to a silver white. The amount of tin employed varied much, as will be seen from the following analyses :-

	Kinross (1747).	Leith, New Kirk (1776).	Kilbarchan (1783).	Edinburgh, Canongate (1813).	Leith, North Kirk (1816).	Kilmalcolm (1819).
Lead . . .	62.74	37.01	19.37	84.71	52.04	46.31
Tin . . .	37.26	62.99	80.63	15.29	47.96	53.69
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00



Fig.21
Kilbarchan 1783
Fig.22
Edinburgh Canongate 1813
Fig.23
Leith North Kirk 1816