

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attachments to mail@leadtokens.org.uk Please note that the contact addresses advertised in earlier versions of LTT are no longer active.

Three of a Kind, and Guild Arms



My thanks to Mark Iglesias for Fig.1, a nice crisp specimen of a mid-17th cent Thames foreshore find with a typical initial triad {A/FA} on one side and a trio of sheaves on the other side. No doubt the issuer was a baker, and the sheaves represent the wheat which he made his bread from.. However, not all trades are as easy to deduce as that.. Some issuers picture the tools of their trade, which gives us a better chance, but not all professional guild arms are so helpful. Who, for example, would guess that a wild man waving a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other was an apothecary {Fig.8}?



8 Quite a number of guild depictions involve showing three of something, one above two or two above one, rather like the initials which so frequently appear on the other side. Sometimes they are on a shield {Figs.2-5}, sometimes they are not {Figs.1,6-7}. If you see three of something on a piece, the chance of a guild piece increases; although be aware, it may still be a shop sign.

Two of the most common depictions on a pre-industrial token, whether lead, copper or brass, are those which indicate either the trade or the shop sign of the issuer. The shop sign, a pictorial substitute for a person's name in an age of widespread illiteracy, can be anything of his choice; whereas his profession can be expressed in any one of four different manners:

- ⇒ Direct statement in words.
- ⇒ Picture of the produce of trade.
- ⇒ Picture of the tools of trade.
- ⇒ Arms of the relevant professional guild.



All four are frequently encountered on 17th cent brass and copper, but forget the first on small flan lead; we all know that full words, whatever they are about, are a rarity. The other three do all appear on lead, although as the quality of depiction drops off during the 18th cent, with less accuracy and consequently with less chance of identification. Best of luck when trying your hand at Figs.13-14!

Words one can Google, but pictures one cannot.. You can find pictures of specific guild arms, if you have taken a guess, but what you really need is a display of most of the commonest guild arms together, so that one can compare. Token author Michael Dickinson has very helpfully put together a display of fifty-four such guild arms on three pages at the back of his 1986 work on "The Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and their Values", which he has very kindly permitted me to include in LTT. These, for which I thank him, follow over-leaf; I recommend them to you, as a good first try when attempting to identify any suspected armorial device, whether on a shield or not, which appears on a token.



Guild Arms on 17th Century Tokens, page 1 of 3

{courtesy of Michael Dickinson's 1986 book on the series}



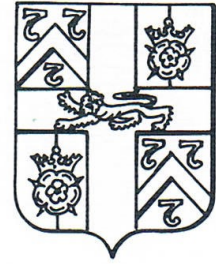
Apothecaries



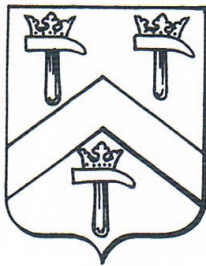
Armourers



Bakers



Barber Surgeons



Blacksmiths



Brewers



Bricklayers



Butchers



Carpenters



Clothworkers



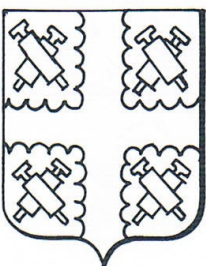
Cooks



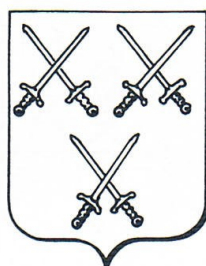
Coopers



Cordwainers



Curriers



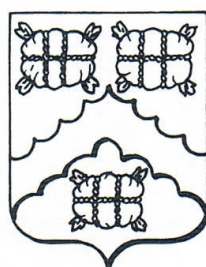
Cutlers



Distillers



Drapers



Dyers

Guild Arms on 17th Century Tokens, page 2 of 3

{courtesy of Michael Dickinson's 1986 book on the series}



Feltmakers



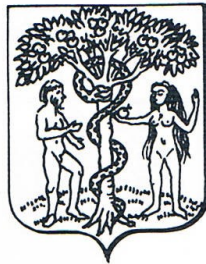
Fishmongers



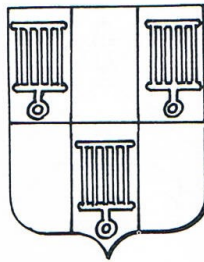
Fletchers



Founders



Fruiterers



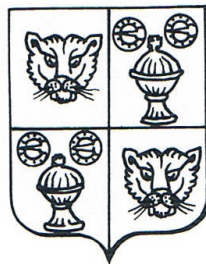
Girdlers



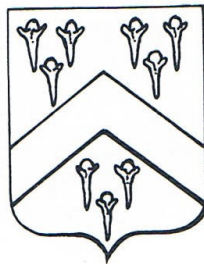
Glaziers



Glovers



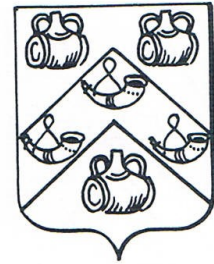
Goldsmiths



Grocers



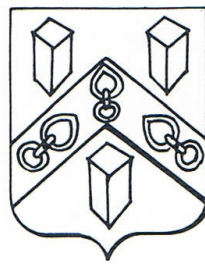
Haberdashers



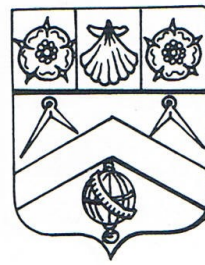
Horners



Innholders



Ironmongers



Joiners



Leathersellers



Mercers



Merchant Venturers

Guild Arms on 17th Century Tokens, page 3 of 3

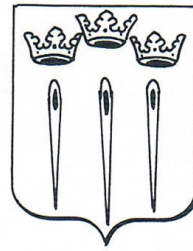
{courtesy of Michael Dickinson's 1986 book on the series}



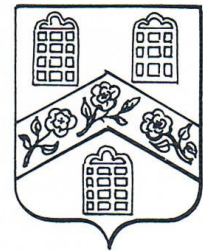
Merchant Taylors



Merchant Staplers



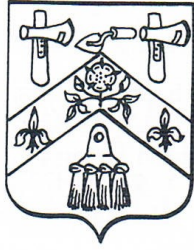
Needlemakers



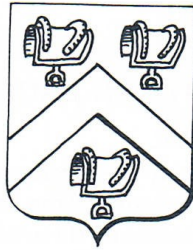
Pewterers



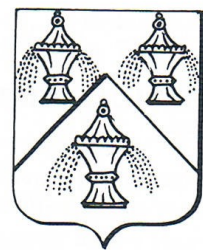
Pinners



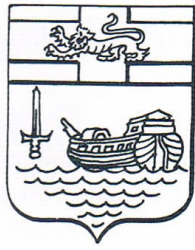
Plasterers



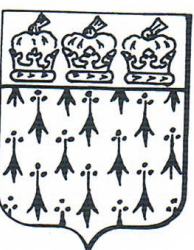
Saddlers



Salters



Shipwrights



Skinners



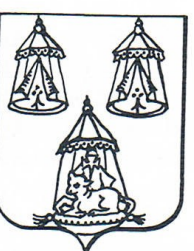
Soapmakers



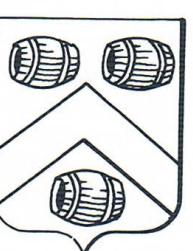
Stationers



Tallow Chandlers



Upholders



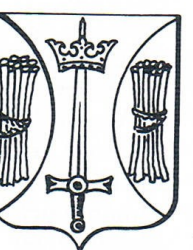
Vintners



Watermen



Weavers



Woodmongers

Readers' Correspondence

Very appropriately, given the previous article, we start this month with another specimen of Williamson's Kent.590 {Fig.1}, kindly sent in by William Gosman. This is the exact same issue as that previously discussed in LTT_161 {Mar/Apr 2024}, except that William's specimen is in much better condition than those previously seen, thereby confirming both the issuer and the date: Thomas Mayne of Canterbury {suspected} and 1645 {previously uncertain}. William's findspot was just outside the village of Wingham, which just happens to be almost midway between Canterbury, the home of the issuer, and Sandwich, where the specimen reported in LTT_161 was found. My apologies if anyone thinks I have gone a bit over the top in Fig.1c with the rendering of the date, but it was necessary; not even the 3:2 magnification of Fig.1b is good enough to show the last digit accurately.



Fig.2, a uniface piece from Geoff Blindell, is another of those interesting examples of a depiction which looks total nonsense until you turn it round. Fig.2a was how it was first presented, but then, turn it round, in this case 90 degrees anti-clockwise, and it all falls into shape. All of a sudden, one can make out two standing figures who are either arguing, or cooperating in some activity, maybe work-related. They might be two porters loading a

stretcher which they are later going to carry, or maybe one is a woodworker at his bench and the other guy is helping him. Hints also, when you do rotate, of a couple of initials below; "ST" is suggested. It is an interesting piece, probably from the late 18th cent or very early 19th, and a good example of the challenges of identifying crude art.

Paul Johnson's Fig.3 is unorthodox, but very pleasantly so. He asks whether it might be a love token, and whilst I have never seen a lead item which has been definitely confirmed as a love token, I certainly feel that, given the content and its arrangement, it is a very feasible suggestion. The straight edge will probably be due to simple implement damage, inflicted by a spade or something similar. We sometimes conjecture in these pages that certain categories of token which occur in other metals might reasonably do so in lead as well, but have not been confirmed as such; therefore, it is a delight when a token comes forward which looks as if it might support the theory.



Fig.4 has been seen before, on page 2 of LTT_161, where we suggested that it might depict two agricultural labourers operating a seed drill. Owner Julian Spye is now wondering whether it might be a family of three, i.e. mother and father with a child between them. Well, I can see where he gets the idea from and I have to admire the imagination, which is precisely what lead tokens need for their secrets to be revealed. I can also see that the would-be lad/lass in the middle is getting a tad stropy. Happy memories {been there, done it}, and an amusing idea. Just wonder why you would need a token with that? An award of family allowance, maybe, or to entitle you to the Government-provided nursery education of the {18th cent} day? For the moment, I think I will stick with the seed drill.



Fig.5, from Mark Iglesias, is a BNJ54 type L with an invalidation stamp through it. I'm guessing the original size is 14-15mm, and I've magnified it about 3:2 Most type Ls are 11-12mm, but there are some larger ones. One side of this one is of very typical type L design; the other is a bit more obscure; however, there are more pieces out there

than BNJ54 either lists or illustrates; so, if you find one which follows the general trend of a category but doesn't exactly fit, don't feel you necessarily have to eliminate it.



The design of several petals in a circle, occasionally truncated as on Nicola White's Fig.6, is a common theme; usually there are 4-6 petals, but occasionally three as here. That it is not a cartwheel, another common stock token design choice, is evident from the fact that the lines are clearly grouped into three pairs, rather than being evenly spaced. A vague alternative possibility is that they could be intended as windmill sails, with one arm doubling up as a mill tower, but I think it unlikely.

The other unusual feature about the piece is that there appears to have been a half-hearted attempt to amend the shape from round to hexagonal. There is no reason why a token should not be hexagonal, and we know that there were a small proportion of non-circular pieces in the main 17th cent {Williamson} token series, but on lead alternative shapes were fairly unusual. One of the first precautions with a slightly irregular piece like this is to check that there are no protrusions on the back of the piece which might suggest that it was a button.

Finally, Stephen Booth's Fig.7, a most attractive 1638-dated seal, beautifully clear, from Sandwich. OK, it is a seal, rather than a token, but being of a design which would feel so at home on a token, it was too good not to include. Especially as a similarly-dated piece from the same town has already featured at the start of this article!



A Lady Lead Token Issuer?

My first correspondent of 2025, Marcus Stratman, has kindly produced what possibly may be another first; namely, a lead token which can be firmly related to a named lady. We could wish that she had a slightly rarer name than Ann Jones, to aid us in locating her, but we must not be picky; let us be content that she, and her piece, exist at all. Any full name is rare enough on lead, whatever the sex.



Research by various members of the Token Corresponding Society has suggested that, overall, about 4% of tokens are issued by ladies; most of them being probably the widows, daughters and other relatives of deceased male shopkeepers and innkeepers. Whether that figure applies with lead I rather doubt, due to the fact that a high percentage of pieces are concerned with parish charity, running large estates, or paying agricultural labourers to pick crops.

My suspicion is that most likely Ann, who some of you may think bears an uncanny similarity to a Roman emperor, is running some small commercial premises such as a shop or inn; however, there is just the possibility that the piece could be a lead equivalent of a love token, birth notification or memento mori {death commemorative}. Worn out copper halfpennies, reused and engraved, are the normal choices for such things; however, the use of lead, although unlikely, cannot be totally ruled out.



Readers may like to compare the style of the pieces with those on the front page of LTT_124, the obverse of which are again produced here; there seems something of a similarity. 20-21mm in diameter, they come from West Berkshire and Wiltshire respectively.

Serial Numbers on Communion Tokens

In the last issue, LTT_166, we wished a happy 2025 to all our readers. Anyone wonder where the contributing pieces came from? All is revealed; two communion tokens {CTs}, from Lundie & Foulis {Angus} and Dalkeith. By chance I had to have access to a CT with serial number 202, which was very convenient; you may even see it again several times in the next few years.



Not many parishes have CT serial numbers which run as high as 202. On the right is a table of all the British CTs which have serial numbers high enough not to be confused with table numbers, complete with a list of the largest numbers noted. Most of them are Scottish, 19th cent white metal issues, and from larger places than Londie & Foulis. The actual largest numbers are probably a little higher, given the small size of the statistical samples seen; for example, South Leith is suspected of running up to 1008 {seven gross}, whilst St.Cuthberts might reasonably stop at 2000 or 2016 {fourteen gross}.

Burz.1672	Ros & Cromarty	86
Burz.5943	Roseneath	108
Burz.1184	Carsphairn	116
Burz.2155	Dundee	177
Burz.5322	Norwich	215
Burz.4257	Lundie & Foulis	267
Burz.2884	Glasgow Wynd	349
Burz.1008	Glasgow Bridgegate Free	471
Burz.5773	Port Glasgow	495
Burz.733	Glasgow Barony	774
Burz.6357	South Leith	993
Burz.6912	Edinburgh, Tolbooth	1155
Burz.5774	Port Glasgow	1328
Burz.6453	Edinburgh, St.Cuthberts {1847}	1377
Burz.2380	Edinburgh, St.Cuthberts {1865}	1970

Serial numbers, being unique, are always counter-stamped or engraved; whereas table numbers were only sometimes inserted in this way; when ordering a gross, or some similar quantity, it was often considered worthwhile, in the days of the 19th cent white metal issues, to embody the table number in the design and commission a separate die for each.



LTT_84 showed several of the later Glasgow and Edinburgh examples. Below are two of the more rustic looking and probably earlier pieces of Port Glasgow {Figs.3-4}, which consign the serial number to the back, whilst Fig.5 is one of the few serial-numbered pieces from a smaller location, in this case Cromarty. The design of the Cromarty piece strongly hints at an Aberdeen manufacturer who was active c.1830. Finally, as far as purely numeric serial numbers go, is Fig.6, from a Glasgow parish and of typical local design, which holds the serial number in the central space normally reserved for the table number or date..



Just a very few churches, maybe only two or three, employ an alternative system whereby the membership of the congregation, or the seats, are divided up into lettered blocks. Which, I do not know, but here {Fig.7-8} are examples of F29 from Partick West and H6 from Fairmilehead. 1938? That is late for a CT in normal rather than commemorative use. Indeed, probably the last in Scotland.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1a 2a 3a 4a 5a 6a 7a 8a 9a 10a

1b 2b 3b 4b 5b 6b 7b 8b 9b 10b

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

11a 12a 13a 14a 15a 16a 17a 18a 19a 20a

11b 12b 13b 14b 15b 16b 17b 18b 19b 20b

21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

21a 22a 23a 24a 25a 26a 27a 28a 29a 30a

21b 22b 23b 24b 25b 26b 27b 28b 29b 30b

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39

31a 32a 33a 34a 35a 36a 37a 38a 39a

31b 32b 33b 34b 35b 36b 37b 38b 39b

Article

A nice group