



THE ONTARIO NUMISMATIST

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ENGLISH TOKENS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By John Middlebrook

(Late of the London Numismatic Society)

Nearly everyone has at some period of their lives attempted to put away, hoard up or otherwise get together a collection of Coins of the Realm. Some of us have even carried it so far as to pile up dollar bills, but personally I was never able for at least a goodly number of years to get beyond the humble copper which is probably the reason I am writing this article.

I do not expect that this short sketch on the Halfpenny Tokens of the Eighteenth Century will be of any value numismatically but I would like to bring to your attention some of the many tokens I have collected during the past fifty years, even if I cannot convey to you the pleasure that their collecting has given me.

Coins, and naturally tokens, are expected to be in constant circulation until, worn smooth by constant handling and abrasion, their day of usefulness is over and they are once more returned to the mint to be melted down.

I do not suppose that the tokens of which I am speaking were ever returned to their issuer for this purpose, but we do find a vast quantity that must have had a fairly long life of usefulness if we take into consideration the state or condition in which we find them today.

Occasionally, I suppose, one found itself stored away in an old stocking with coins of greater value, or some other neglected place, or again, even in those days there were those like ourselves who might lock them away for many years, but eventually there comes a time when they are once more brought into the light of day and disposed of. I have purchased several small collections that have been found in

application to manufacture, it became evident that copper coins, especially halfpennies, were sorely needed. So naturally some of the more adventurous again began to issue their own coinage. These coins followed closely to the regal coinage in both size and weight and many really beautiful pieces were issued. John Wilkinson, iron founder, and his friend, Thomas Williams, the Anglesey Copper Magnate, were among the first to strike copper tokens for some of these may be found bearing the date 1787. Williams struck his coins under the name of Pary's Mining Co., perhaps being too unassuming to use his own name, or realizing that counterfeiting was punishable by death; but Wilkinson came out openly and "Struck his own mugg" on the obverse with the legend "John Wilkinson Ironmaster". These were made payable in such places as Snedshill, Bersham, Bradley and Willey; but later were extended to Anglesey, London or Liverpool. Some 240 varieties by Wilkinson are listed but many of these are forgeries and I am not going into the controversial subject of counterfeiters and forgeries because probably many of the so-called counterfeiters were offered in all good faith by numerous reliable merchants. So far as the Wilkinson halfpence are concerned, they all bear his bust on the obverse with the words JOHN WILKINSON IRONMASTER, the reverse being the usual one of three types:- A SAIL-BARGE - Wilkinson being perhaps the first person to build an Iron barge: INTERIOR VIEW OF FORGE with man working trip hammer, or VULCAN AT THE FORGE working on an iron bar. I have several with the name spelled Wilkenson and Wilkinson which were probably never put out by John Wilkinson. The tokens of the Anglesey Miners halfpenny bearing the monogram of the Pary's Mining Co. are so well known that they need scarcely be mentioned were it not for that marvellous piece of engraving on the obverse - the Druid's Head surrounded by its wreath of oak leaves and acorns. There are at least upwards of 200 varieties of tokens bearing the Druid's Head of which I have seen eighty-five. Of course, many of these are just different dies, having a different number of leaves or acorns on the wreath. These are things that do not interest the beginner, as a rule; but as the Halfpenny Tokens number upwards of 8,000 or more, one must decide for himself or herself what type of token will be most interesting. Personally, I started too young to know anything about specializing on any one particular subject and therefore have, as yet, only a general collection. A little bit of everything and everything of nothing. Had I been starting to-day to collect these halfpenny Tokens with the experience I have gained from the years that have passed I would probably have worked out my preference as follows:-

COUNTIES AND TOWNS -- Some counties have only one or two issues while others have hundreds. Most of them will be included if I decide on some other subject such as:-

TRADES & OCCUPATIONS - Almost every type of occupation is represented from a lace maker to a stoking manufacturer, from a grocer to an umbrella maker, a hop garden to a whale fishery. This might be a good selection for someone as it about covers everything in the way of industry. Or again, we could decide upon SHIPS. These are very numerous. Nearly every county & town bordering on the sea is represented. Gosport, Ipswich, London, Lancaster, Liverpool, Lowestprt, Norwich, Hull, Chelmsford, Portsea and many others. For a sailor this would make an ideal choice as the coat of arms of the various towns are often depicted on the opposite side.

PORTRAITS & HISTORICAL - I group these two together because the portraits all represent some phase of English History. For instance,

Shakespeare, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Samuel Johnson, John Howard, Lord Nelson, Lord Howe, Queen Elizabeth, Lady Godiva, The Prince and Princess of Wales, The Duke of York, Bishop Blaze, Charles Roe, David Garrick, John Wilkinson, T. Erskine, founder of Bath. I think that this would be my choice although for beauty of workmanship we must really consider one more, that of:-

ARCHITECTURE - Naturally the tokens picturing architecture are objects of beauty. For instance, which of us can look upon the York Halfpenny depicting York Minster on the one side and Cliffords Tower on the other without acknowledging the skillful workmanship of the designer. There are many others - The Marked Cross at Chichester, The Shire Hall at Essex, Salisbury Cathedral, The Castle at Colchester, The Abbey at Beccles. Nor must we forget Skidmore's Churches & Gates of London. So many of these are historical, their names have become part and parcel of that little spot of ground We call England.

I have in my collection every one of the tokens that I have mentioned. Have taken time off to examine them while writing this article and my advise to anyone commencing the collecting and study of the 18th Century Halfpenny Tokens would be to combine these last two subjects - Portraits and Architecture. You will then have something that you will be proud to exhibit and talk about to your friends.

Some of these are expensive and are fairly easy to obtain, yet each and everyone is an interesting record of those so-called "Good Old Days". One could almost go on indefinitely for there are so many that, to me at least, are interesting. For instance - A Naval Piece showing one of the "Wooden Walls of Old England", which reads 'The Guard and Glory of Britain'. The Glorious First of June records the date of the victory of Lord Howe over the French Fleet at Cape Ushant, June 1, 1794. This was payable in Lancaster, London or Bristol. Lancaster is still a port - not on the sea, but on the River Lune. Much of her merchantile glory has departed owing to other ports being built much nearer the open water, but the quayside is still bounded by tall warehouses which today are filled more with grain and cement than the riches of the Indian trade that once were stored therein.

Many and various are the inscriptions upon these shipping tokens: "To Trade & Commerce", "May Navigation Flourish", "Pro Bono Publico", "For Change Not Fraud", "Prosperity to Old England" and "Success to the Commerce of Britain", The British Naval Halfpenny of Lord Nelson - "England Expects Every Man To Do His Duty", The Cinque Ports Token with the bust of the Right Hon. W. Pitts, Warden of the Cinque Ports comprising the five ports of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich. This was payable at Horn's Library, Dover.

I ramble on at length but a few more must be mentioned, for almost every trade has its own representative design. As previously mentioned, there is the Iron Founder's Halfpenny showing Vulcan at the forge, the Mechanic's Halfpenny, the Steam Hammer, or the Inclined Plane at Ketley, etc., the Woollen Merchant, a bale of wool; the Weaver, a weaving loom; the Lace Maker, a girl making lace; the Miller, a windmill; the Farmer, a plough, etc.; the Fisherman, a whaleboat & whale. The Philanthropist is represented by John Howard whose labours on behalf of prisoners, and the subsequent liberation of debtors, is commemorated on at least two tokens. Lancaster shows the Castle, an angel with a key to open the door. The sun is rising over the words "GO FORTH" and around the edge is inscribed the words "Remember

the Debtors in Goal". On the obverse is a bust of John Howard F.R.S. The Bath Token is slightly larger in the flan bearing the arms of Bath on the obverse. The only difference on the reverse being that the word ILCHESTER is added to the inscription, "Remember the Debtors in Ilchester Goal".

William Shakespeare, whose portrait adorns several pieces, represents the poets, Dr. Samuel Johnson the authors, Isaac Newton the scientists, David Garrick the thespians. The Corresponding Society depicts Aesops Fable of the Bundle of Sticks, one alone can do nothing but collectively many can do much. The Musician might make merry upon the Harp of Wales and neither the Chelsea Pensioner nor the inmates of the Poorhouse are forgotten.

East Grinstead issued a token bearing the Masonic Arms with the Prince of Wales as Grand Master, and London also issued one for the Oddfellows. The Gardener and the Botanist may take comfort from the Bath token of 1794 showing the entrance to the Botanical Gardens and the Biblical quotation from the first Book of Kings - He (Solomon) spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.

OLD JOHN OF GAUNT, time honour'd Lancaster, whose portrait adorns many tokens other than those of Lancaster, such as London, Leeds, Liverpool, Staeford, Coventry, etc.

In this connection there may be another reason for John of Gaunt's portrait on the obverse (other than the saving occasioned by using only one new die), The fact that the reigning sovereign, whoever he may be, male or female is the Duke of Lancaster. I well remember Victoria as the Duke of Lancaster and who can fail to recall that impassioned utterance of John of Gaunt from Act 2 of Shakespeare's King Richard 11- "This happy breed of men. This little world. This precious stone set in the silver sea. This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, This England." No account of English Tokens would be complete without a reference being made to the town of Coventry in Warwickshire which was so badly blitzed during the last war as almost to require complete rebuilding, the design of which is being left to the householders themselves. Everyone is having a say in it, even the children. there are about 30 varieties of these Coventry Tokens (exclusive of "Kempton's Coventry Buildings) but these are mostly different dies or different edges of the same tokens and so the whole lot may be practically covered by these three:

1. Obverse-Lady Godiva on Horseback. Rev.: Elephant and Castle.
 2. Obverse: Lady Godiva on Horseback. Rev.: Coventry Cross.
 3. Obverse: Coventry Cross. Rev. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.
- The story of Lady Godiva dates back to the 11th Century when her husband Leofric, Earl of Mercia, imposed a heavier tax upon his people than they were able to pay; and to relieve the people of this tax the Lady Godiva, at her husband's challenge, rode naked through the streets of the town and repealed the same. Each year the scene is re-enacted in Coventry but the Lady Godiva of the pageant states that the authorities of today insist on her wearing more clothing than she does in everyday life. The story is extremely well told in a poem by Tennyson.

One could go on almost indefinitely, for I feel that I have only mentioned a very few of the thousands of tokens which a little search will discover for you, and in the "humble halfpence" I am positive they will prove a veritable mine of information, sufficiently interesting to satisfy the most exacting numismatist.

1975 CONVENTION AUCTION

The Auction for this year's Convention has been awarded to Mr. Jack Dietrich of Markham, Ontario, who submits the following request:-

W A N T E D

COINS AND BANKNOTES

for the

O. N. A. CONVENTION AUCTION

to be held

APRIL 26th and 27th 1975

AT THE VICTORIAN MOTOR INN

STRATFORD ONTARIO

Each item submitted for auction should have a catalogue value of \$10.00 or more.

The charge for each lot accepted and listed will be \$1.00 plus 10% of the selling price, if sold, or \$1.00 plus 10% of the reserve bid if it does not sell.

PREFERRED RATES FOR QUALITY ITEMS

Please submit a list of items that you desire to have auctioned. If accepted, you will be notified as to when to ship.

AUCTIONEER: JACK C. DIETRICH
MARKHAM ONTARIO
L3P 2Z5

YE ED'S NOTE

All materials should be sent to Jack at the above address by registered mail no later than February 26th. We hope to include the auction list in our March Bulletin, if possible, hence the need to expedite your items to Jack.

NEWS AROUND THE COIN CLUBS

BRANTFORD NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

The largest turnout in 10 years, 40 members and guests, attended the last meeting at which the following slate of officers for 1975 was elected:- President - George Wagner, Vice-President - Peter Ferraioli, Secretary - John Barchino, Treasurer - Art Bruner. All the best for 1975.

COLLINGWOOD & DISTRICT NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

The club members are invited to make use of the new Bulletin Board now ready to put up items for sale or items wanted to buy. It is hoped this will prove valuable. Also the club will be taking part in Winterfest being held Feb. 21,22,23. It will be fun.

HURONIA NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

At the last meeting the main item of business was the election of the slate of officers for 1975, which was as follows:- President - Ken Prophet, Vice-President - Marie Ford, Treasurer - Cec. Sharpe, Secretary - Steve Robinson. This was followed by an excellent talk by Mr. Lyle Stewart of Adanak Lock and Safe Co. who gave an excellent presentation and talk on locks and protection for the home. After a well conducted auction a social time was enjoyed. Good luck to the new officers.

INGERSOLL COIN CLUB

At the last meeting, as with most clubs, the election of a slate of officers for 1975 took place, at which the following persons were put in office:- President - Tom Masters, Vice-President - George Gray, Treasurer - Len Coles, Secretary - Howard Whitfield, Directors - Lorne Mercer, Charles Laister and Aulis Koslonen. After this business a social time was enjoyed. All good wishes for 1975 numismatically.

NIAGARA FALLS COIN CLUB

The officers elected to lead the club for 1975 were :- President - Peter Kostyk, Vice-President - Donald Brown, Treasurer - George Athoe, Secretary - Marge Smith. Pat Lambert thanked the outgoing executive for a job well done. Members received good news in the form of an announcement that fees have been reduced by 33%. In these days of inflation this is really something. A talk on symbols was given by Howard Hill. In his talk Mr. Hill asked what the rabbit symbol stood for on our centennial nickel. The answer he received from Mr. Hottot was that it showed "how fast our money goes". A lively auction closed the meeting.

ST. CATHARINES COIN CLUB

The first meeting of 1975 saw 82 members and guests present with the new president, Stan Aaroe, conducting the meeting. The main feature of the meeting was the O.N.A. Audio-visual slides on "Canadian Voyageur Dollar". This is a worthwhile slide and was enjoyed by all. Lloyd Dorsey conducted a good auction, assisted by George Oblinsky and Willie Nielsen. The draw winners were John Turner and Bob Voaden and the display winner was Jan Nielsen. A good start for 1975

STRATFORD COIN CLUB

The last meeting saw the goal of 40 members present beaten by 1 and now the problem arises that after an attendance of 50 is reached a new meeting place will have to be found as the present one will be too small. What a lovely problem! A progress report was given on the forthcoming O.N.A. Convention on April 26th and 27th. The president stated over 50% of the bourse tables are sold, tours of the city have been completed and nine pages of advertising have been sold for the Souvenir Programme. Everything really looks good for April. This meeting was advertised as a trade, buy, sell, wheel and deal night and from the activity it was successful. A good auction closed the meeting.

YE EBI'S NOTE - As there was a degree of urgency this month in getting the Bulletin out early in order to give the members time to get items for the auction at the Convention to Mr. Jack Dietrich in time for him to get his list out in the March Bulletin some clubs have not arrived. However they will be here in March. Thank you.

PROPOSED COIN SHOWS

Listed below are the proposed coin club shows we have with dates and banquets. Please check this list as you decide on a date for your forthcoming show to see if any of these dates conflict with your date.

- Feb. 8 - Huronia Numismatic Association's 2nd annual Mini-Show featuring coins, stamps and antiques during Winter Carnival Week at the Bayfield Mall, Bayfield St., Barrie, Ont. Enquiries re bourse, etc., to Richard A. Ford, P.O. Box 243, Barrie, Ontario.
- Mar. 22-23- Waterloo Coin Society annual show and banquet at the Walper Hotel, King & Queen Streets, Kitchener, Ont. Enquiries re bourse, displays, etc., to the club president.
- Mar. 22 - North York Coin Club Annual Show, Bourse, Book and White Elephant Sale, at the North York Community Hall, 5090 Yonge Street, Willowdale, Ont. from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. For information contact P.O. Box 294, Willowdale, Ont.
- Apr. 12 - 13-City of Ottawa Coin Club annual show and banquet in the Chateau Laurier Hotel. For Information please contact R. Johnston, 14 Via Venus, Ottawa, Ont, K1K ON4.
- Apr. 26-27-Ontario Numismatic Association Annual Convention in the Victorian Motor Inn, Stratford, Ont. Details re bourse, Displays, Reservations, etc. to Stratford Coin Club, P.O. Box 262, Stratford, Ont.
- July 14-16-Canadian Numismatic Association Annual Convention to be held in Calgary, Alberta. More details later.
- Aug. 9 - Collingwood & District Numismatic Association First Annual Show at the Lion's Den, Collingwood, from 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. For information re bourse, displays, etc., contact Richard Ford, P.O. Box 565, Collingwood, Ont. Displays enquiries to George Collins, P.O. Box 565, Collingwood, Ont.
- Oct. 18 - St. Catharines Coin Club Annual Show and Banquet. Details later when arranged.

STRING ALONG WITH CHINA'S KNIFE MONEY

(From the Paramount Journal, October 1974)

Thanks to London Numismatic Society

To write a "short" history of China's knife money would be something of an undertaking for it actually covers a longer period of time than that of any other country in the world.

It is quite true that the Lydians made the first actual coins around 700 B.C., but the Chinese had long been using a multiplicity of objects in place of money, even before the first coin was ever a gleam in the Lydian's eyes.

A fine example of this is the "Tao" or "knife" money. Shaped much like a knife, one could trade with it as successfully as with a real knife. One could also trade with a number of other similar numismatically-oriented objects--like hoes, spades, even shirts. Chinese logic: Better to use a representative object than the real thing.

It was the "knife" money, however, that found the most favour among the Chinese. Didn't one, when carrying a knife, suspend it from his belt or wrist on a strip of leather run through a hole in the handle?

Why, then, with this method of transportation so acceptable, shouldn't one apply the same convenience to his trading objects? Thus the "Taos" of "knife" money was strung together on leather thongs for any large purchases requiring a lot of "cash".

As the centuries rolled by, the blades became smaller and smaller, until eventually the 'knife' money began to resemble a string of keys. After awhile, the "disappearance" act grew even more pronounced and by the time Confucius made his appearance, the "cash" coins were finally down to just a handle with a square hole in the centre. These were exceedingly popular with the Chinese people and by the time construction finally began on the Great Wall of China, huge quantities of Taos were in circulation. This was late in the 3rd. century.

With the Taos great popularity, they were destined to go on and on, without any change whatsoever, for almost 2,500 years. As a matter of fact, China actually minted no modern coinage until 1889. These bronze pieces of "knife" money or Taos, if you will, soon took on the name of "cash" coinage. This should not be confused with our term "cash". An interesting thing about Chinese "cash" coins is that they are of just one value. There are 4 characters on the obverse to indicate the ruler's name and to tell the people that it is a "precious coin". Quite frequently the reverses were left blank but occasionally a couple of characters would indicate the location of the mint.

If one wishes to collect the Chinese "cash" money, classification would be easy. There were ten main dynasties which produced these coins, The Chow Dynasty, 1122-1255 B.C., the Han Empire, 206 B.C.-220 A.D., the Wei Dynasty, 386-557, the Sui, 581-618, the T'ang, 618-906, Northern Sung, 960-1126, Southern Sung, 1126-1644 and the Ch'ing (or Manchu) Dynasty, 1644-1912.

So go ahead, grab a strip of leather and string yourself a collection of China's "knife" money. Fabulous.

Reference and recommended reading: Illustrated Encyclopedia of World Coins -- Hobson & Obojski.

THIS 'N THAT

Right off the bat let me say here to those coin clubs who are normally represented in this Bulletin that I regret that this month your club news will arrive too late for insertion, however I promise that you will be in the March Bulletin for sure. In addition to this apology I would also remind club bulletin editors that I would like all your bulletins to arrive at P.O. Box 311, St. Catharines at the latest the 25th of the month----As Convention time draws near, I would respectfully draw our members attention to three most important items coming up - (a) Election of Officers, you will see elsewhere in this Bulletin those members who are willing to stand and act for you, the members. We trust that you will attend the General Meeting to give them your support. (b) We have to discuss what we are going to do in the future as far as judging is concerned, more of this from Chairman Ray Pleau and (c) membership and the drop in club members; please, come prepared to give us your ideason how we can improve our membership and indeed the whole operation of the O.N.A.*****Finally, I would stress the importance of getting your auction material away to our friend, Jack Deitrich, as early as possible to the address shown elsewhere in this Bulletin--- So long for now, Mr. & Mrs. Ye Ed.