

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

Cartwheel Pennies and Twopences

The coin in your possession is a penny/twopence, inscribed on the obverse: GEORGIUS.III.D.G.: REX (GEORGE III, by the Grace of God, King); on the reverse: BRITANNIA 1797. The broad raised band, forming the rim of both the penny and the two pence, has earned them the name of the "cartwheel" type. The coins are of copper and were issued in 1797 in accordance with a contract between Matthew Boulton and the Treasury. The former was there ordered to execute coinage to the amount of 500 tons at £108 per ton, to consist of 20 tons of 2d. pieces and 480 tons of 1d. pieces. These were minted at the Soho Works of Boulton and Watt, Handsworth, Birmingham, and for this reason on a rock near the base of the shield on the reverse is the word SOHO. The designer was Conrad Heinrich Kuchler (1740? - 1810), and his initial 'K' occurs on the lowest fold of the drapery at the neck of the obverse bust.

This was the first copper coinage to be issued since 1775, because forgery of coins had become so rampant in that year that perhaps only 20% of those issued were authentic. To prevent a recurrence of this situation the coins of 1797 are better struck up and errors are less common. For the first time coins are designed to be of measured diameter and weight - an idea that originated with Matthew Boulton. Size was now uniform and coins heavier. The twopence weighs 2oz. exactly and the penny 1oz. The two pence is the largest copper coin ever struck in England with authority and the only twopenny piece in copper. The very size of the "cartwheel" issue, however, made it inconvenient to use and restricted it to one year only. A halfpenny and farthing of the same type exist as patterns, but neither was ever issued for circulation.

Since so many were struck the "cartwheel" penny and twopence are both very common, although they are difficult to obtain in fine condition.

Further reading

G.C. Brooke, English Coins (1950 and later editions)

S. M. Mitchell & B. Reeds, Standard Catalogue of British Coins I: Coins of England and the United Kingdom (published annually)

P. Sealy The Story of the British Coinage (1985)

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

The Coinage of 1806 and 1807

The object in your possession is a copper penny/halfpenny/farthing, bearing the inscription GEORGIUS III D.G. (George III, by the Grace of God, King) 1806/1807 on the obverse and BRITANNIA on the reverse. These coins formed the Fourth Issue of George III's reign and were struck at the Soho Works of Boulton and Watt, Handsworth, Birmingham. For this reason, on a rock nearly midway up the right side of the shield' on the reverse is the word SOHO, while between the shield and the butt of the trident is the letter K, the initial of Conrad Heinrich Kuchler (1740? - 1810) the designer. The edge is noticeable: it is grooved down the centre and also milled with short wavy lines which lie diagonally across the groove so as to add to the difficulties of counterfeiting.

The coins are very common. The pennies and farthings came into circulation first and were distributed and sold by Boulton and Watt from their London premises off Fenchurch Street in casks weighing 3cwt. net., value £33.12s. of which 1/12th was in farthings. The reason for the size of the issue was that towards the end of the 18th century the Mint had become so inefficient in supplying small change that tradesmen had been obliged to issue their own in the form of tokens. The regal coinage of 1797, 1799 and 1806 - 7 was an attempt, and a successful one, to supplant the tokens, so that in 1817 it was possible for them to be declared illegal. After 1807, the next farthings were not issued until 1821 and pennies and halfpennies until 1825.

The commercial value of the coins is negligible, unless they happen to be in mint condition.

Further reading:

G.C. Brooke, English Coins (1950 and later editions)

S. Mitchell and B. Reeds, Standard Catalogue of British Coins I: coins of England and the United Kingdom (published annually)

P. Sealy, The Story of the British Coinage (1985)

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

Trade Tokens of the Seventeenth Century (1649-1672)

Until 1672, all the English regal coinage was of gold or silver, which meant that the lower denominations, if they were not to be worth more than their face value, had to be exceedingly small and were easily lost. The cost of striking them was scarcely less than that of the large pieces so that it was in the interests of the Mint to issue as little small change as possible, and the lowest denomination remained the halfpenny. The section of the community that suffered from this was the poor, because of their hand to mouth existence and because persons were often not disposed to part with as much as a penny or twopence or to lose time staying to change money "Whereby they may contract a noisome smell or the disease of the poor".

The coining of copper and brass was the prerogative of the Crown, but this was put an end to by the death of Charles I in 1649 and from that date until 1672 traders and local authorities in cities, towns and even villages throughout England, Wales and Ireland issued tokens. These were current in a small area or sometimes further afield, and as soon as they had accumulated enough they were returned by tradesmen to the issuers in exchange for silver or notes. Tokens of the 17th century were usually circular, worth a halfpenny or a farthing and made of copper or brass. They were minted by the issuers or more commonly by professional token-makers, who operated in London or travelled the country. The normal type contains an inscription continued from obverse to reverse, of which the following is an example: RICHARD CHESTER HIS HALFPENNY OF BATLEY 1668. The design in the centre of the obverse takes various forms. Sometimes it is the arms of the Company such as the Grocers' or Cutlers' to which the issuer belonged, or his initials and those of his wife, or a rebus on his name, like a Thistle for Samuel Tissall of Coventry, or the product of his trade, like the hat for Walter Palmer, capper, of Bewdley. A keeper of an inn or shop could use its sign. The interest of 17th century tokens is that they give information where the various trades were concentrated and who were the common folk who carried them on.

Your token is a:

Further reading:

M. Dickinson, Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and their Values (1986)

J.R.S. Whiting, Trade Tokens: A Social and Economic History (1971)

G.C. Williamson, Trade Tokens Issued in the Seventeenth Century (1889-91, reprint 1967)

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

Trade Tokens of the Eighteenth Century (1787 - 1799)

After 1775 the issue of "small change" - copper coins - by the English Government was stopped, due to the ease with which it could be forged. Old coins continued in use, often in a worn and battered state, and in 1787 trade tokens began to be issued. The earliest tokens of this series were made from copper mined from Parys Mountain in Anglesey, and they bear the head of a druid (Anglesey was sacred to the druids) and the initials of the mining company. Other issuers soon followed suit. The progress of the Industrial Revolution meant that the issuers consisted mainly of large companies engaged in manufacturing industries, rather than of the shopkeepers of 17th century tokens.

The 18th century tokens are invariably round, and are larger, thicker, more regular and more highly decorated than the 17th century ones. This again reflects the progress of industry, since the earlier tokens had been made entirely by hand, whereas in the 18th century they were machine-made or "milled". The normal denomination is the halfpenny. The designs vary enormously, depicting many aspects of life in Georgian times: scenes of industry, local buildings, transport, symbols of prosperity, famous people, and so on. Proper trade tokens normally give the value, place and date on the obverse and reverse, and the name of the issuer around the edge. An appropriate assurance of good faith is sometimes included: "To facilitate trade". "For public accommodation" or "For change not fraud".

However, many tokens were issued for general circulation by persons who had no intention of redeeming their products for official coins. Other "tokens" were issued specially for collectors, or as political propaganda or satire, or merely as advertisements.

Your token is a:

Further reading

R. Dalton & S.H.Hamer, The Provincial Token Coinage (1910, reprint 1977)

J.R.S. Whiting, Trade Tokens: A Social and Economic History (1971)

Date:

Entry No:

Trade Tokens of the early Nineteenth Century

Trade tokens were issued in England (and sometimes in Scotland, Wales and Ireland) during three main periods: 1649 - 1672, 1787 - 1803 and 1811 - 1813. They were intended to solve the problem of providing sufficient small change for everyday use. The Royal Mint concentrated on providing high value gold and silver coins, but released few "copper" coins during these periods. Therefore private enterprises, such as inns, grocer's shops, and industries, issued their own 'token' copper coins, which they promised to exchange for the equivalent amount in gold and silver coins when enough had been collected.

Most of the tokens of the 1811-13 series were pennies although some higher value silver tokens were issued. They were distributed by developing industrial concerns such as mines, ironworks, lead works, and engineers. The designs often include interesting scenes of factories, transport or local landmarks.

Your token is a :

Further reading

R. Dalton, The Silver Token Coinage 1811-12 (1922, reprint 1968)

W. J. Davis, The Nineteenth Century Token Coinage (1904, reprint 1969)

J. R. S. Whiting, Trade Tokens: A Social and Economic History (1971)

P. and B. Withers, British Copper Tokens 1811 - 1820 (1999)

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

Casting Counters and Jettons

Before the general introduction of the Arabic numeral in the fifteenth century, arithmetical calculations were made in Europe with clumsy Roman numerals. To make reckoning easier metal discs - usually of copper or brass, but occasionally of gold and silver - were used in conjunction with a counting-board or cloth divided into chequers or squares (whence the modern term "Exchequer") and worked like the ancient "abacus".

These discs, called "Jettons" from the French word "Jeter" (to cast or throw), were first made in France in the thirteenth century; they often imitated the types of current coins, but their inscriptions were frequently meaningless. Sometimes, however, they bore pious mottoes such as AVE MARIA PLENA GRATIA "Hail Mary Full of Grace". In the late fifteenth century the German town of Nuremberg began to issue reckoning-pieces, and by the end of the sixteenth century it had become the principal source of supply for Government departments, bankers and merchants in many European countries.

The Nuremberg "Rechenpfennige" (Reckoning-pennies) are mostly of poor workmanship with badly spelt inscriptions in German. The names of a number of makers appear, e.g. Hans Schalte (c.1550-74), Hans Krauwinkel (c.1580-1600) and, in the seventeenth century, Conrad Laufer (c.1660). The Laufer family continued to strike brass counters until the late nineteenth century; these often bear the head of Queen Victoria with a double-headed eagle or the word RECHENPFENNIG on the other side.

The enormous number of Reckoning Counters - both French and German, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth to the seventeenth century - found all over England makes it probable that they were used as small change at a time when official token-coinage of base metal did not exist.

Further reading

E.P. Barnard, The Casting-Counter and the Counting-Board (1916, reprint 1981)

G. Berry, Medieval English Jetons (1974)

B. Edge, The First Dictionary of Paranumismatics (1991)

This matter is being dealt with by

Date:

Entry No:

Imitation Spade Guineas and Half Guineas

The spade guinea of George III is so-called from the spade-shaped shield on the reverse of the coin. The guineas were issued between 1787-1799 and the half-guineas between 1787-1800.

- obverse. GEORGIUS III DEI GRATIA around a bust of George III facing right and wearing a wig tied with a ribbon and a laurel wreath.
- reverse. At the centre a spade-shaped shield with a crown on the top, containing the Royal Arms, and surrounded by the abbreviated inscription, M.B.F.ET..H.REX.F.D.B.ET.L.D.S.R.I.A.T.ET.E.. These are the initial letters of the Latin titles of George III - Magnae Britanniae, Franciae et Hiberniae Rex, Fidei Defensor, Brusviciensis et Lunenburgensis Dux, Sacri Romani Imperil Archi-Thesaurus et Elector, which can be translated - King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith. Duke of Brunswick and Luneberg. Grand Treasurer and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire.

Numerous brass imitations of the guinea and half-guinea exist which follow closely the obverse design of the original, but which on the reverse retain only the spade-shaped shield of arms and substitute such inscriptions as IN MEMORY OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS and THE OLDEN TIMES. Others abbreviate the name, address and activities of the manufacturer to a series of initial letters often including parts of the original Latin abbreviations, while yet others are straightforward traders' advertisements of the familiar nineteenth century type. Many bear a date which is impossible for the spade issue, the most popular being 1768.

Typical inscriptions on the guinea imitations are:-

G.Y.I.ET.F.G.REX.S.UF.ST.D.S.T.M.S.ET = George Yorke Iliffe and Frederick Gardner (Rex). Suffolk Street, die sinkers, tool makers, stampers, etc. Issued between 1878-81.

B.BROS.REX.F.D.CLXX.HOCKLEY.B.I.R.M. - Bancroft Bros.. (Rex fidei defensor) 170 Hockley Hill, Birmingham. Issued between 1875-1878.

The imitations were not issued with any fraudulent intent but to meet the insatiable demand of Victorian England for brass counters to be used in card games, children's games and as money on the stage. The fact that these counters provided a convenient medium for advertising was also exploited.

They were almost entirely Birmingham made. The issue of these counters begins about 1870 and coincides with the virtual disappearance of another popular Victorian counter, known today as the 'To Hanover' medalet.

In addition to these Victorian imitations there are a number of copies which are contemporary with the issue of the genuine coins. They are better struck than the later copies and often have the makers' name below the King's bust on the obverse - such as SIMCOX and KETTLE.

Further Reading

R.N.P. Hawkins, "Catalogue of the Advertisement Imitations of 'Spade Guineas' and their Halves". *British Numismatic Journal*, XXXII (1963), p. 174: XXXIV (1965), p. 149.

B. Edge, The First Dictionary of Par anumismatics (1991)