

BUCKS XVII. CENTURY TRADE TOKENS.

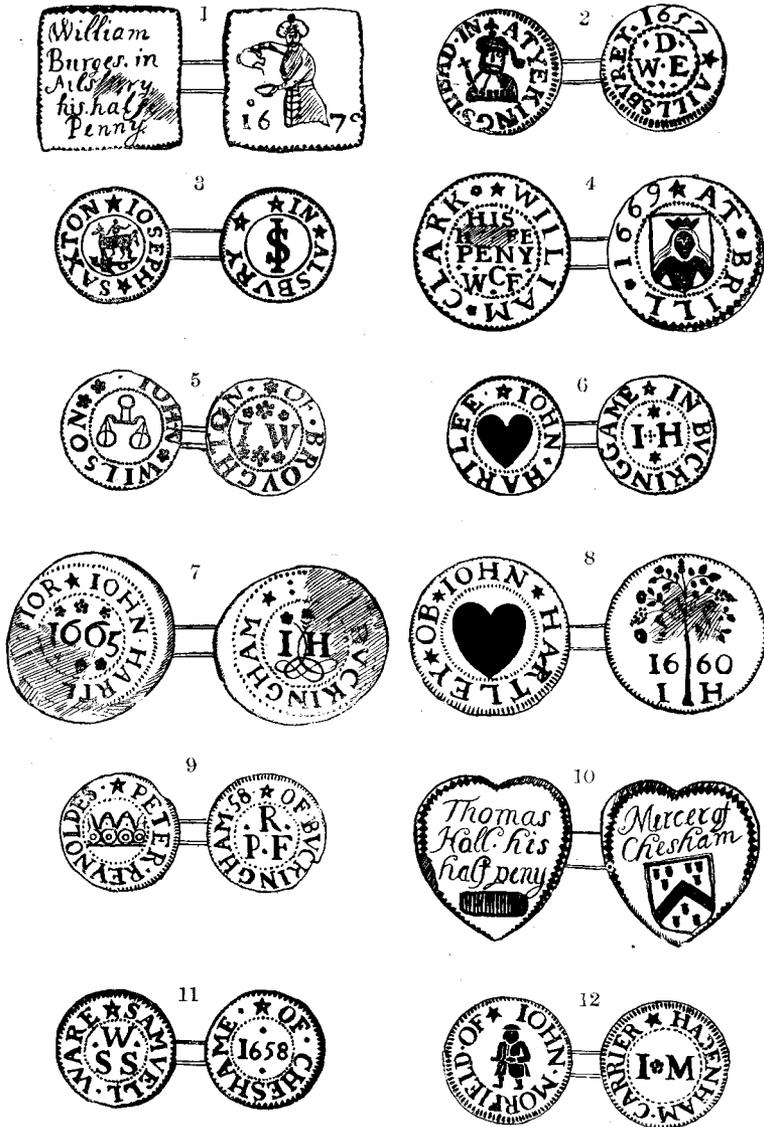
The Bucks Archæological Society has been fortunate in acquiring a nearly complete collection of Tradesmen's Tokens of the 17th Century issued in Bucks, which was formed by Mr. Oliver Ratchiff, late of Olney, the Author of the History and Antiquities of the Newport Hundreds, the collection consisting of 191 out of 203 varieties known up to the present time. There is no record of the total number of varieties of these Tokens which were actually issued in this, or any other County, but the total for the whole Kingdom has been estimated, after much consideration and research, by Mr. Wm. Boyne, F.S.A., a well-known authority, at 20,000 different varieties. From time to time Tokens are found which have hitherto been unpublished, and further additions may yet be made to the list of those belonging to this County.

The cause which led to the whole country being flooded by the issue of these Tokens in the 17th Century was the public necessity for the supply of coins of small denomination for the purposes of trade, and it may be well to explain very shortly the extent to which the demand for a coinage of small values as a medium of exchange had been supplied previous to the 17th Century.

During the Roman occupation the Roman Imperial coinage was in circulation in this Country, including brass (or bronze) coins of small value, and this currency very probably continued for some years after the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain.

The want of small change is said to have been felt as early as the Saxon period, but, with the exception of the small copper pieces, "stycas," coined by the Northumbrian Kings, the Silver Penny continued with comparatively little variation in type up to the Reign of Edward I. to be the smallest denomination of coin issued, though they were sometimes cut in halves and quarters to make halfpennies and farthings. Edward I. coined silver halfpennies and farthings. Silver

Bucks xvii. Century Trade Tokens.



R refers to Ratcliff's List. B refers to Boyne's List.

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|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Aylesbury. R 9. | 2. Aylesbury (Kings Head Inn). R 14. |
| 3. Aylesbury. R 19. | 4. Brill. R 28A. |
| 5. Broughton. R 31A. | 6. Buckingham. R 35. |
| 7. Buckingham. R 38. | 8. Buckingham. R 40. |
| 9. Buckingham. R 43. B 37. | 10. Chesham. R 55. B 49. |
| 11. Chesham. R 61. | 12. Haddenham. R 75. B 67. |

halfpennies and, in most of the subsequent Reigns, silver farthings continued to be issued up to the time of the Commonwealth. Elizabeth also issued a silver three-farthing piece. These coins, from their diminutive size, were very inconvenient and liable to be lost, and were not at any time issued in sufficient quantities to satisfy the popular demand for small change, consequently petitions and complaints on the subject were frequent.

During the Reigns of Henry VII., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, the scarcity of small coins was much felt, and there was urgent need on the part of Tradesmen for a regular and sufficient issue of a small currency. This resulted in traders issuing their own private Tokens of lead or other base metal. These Tokens were of rude workmanship and often uninscribed.* Base continental coins or counters were also used, including probably the Nuremburg Tokens or counters which are constantly found all over the Country.

In the Reign of Elizabeth, patterns were prepared for a copper coinage, but apparently they were never issued from the Royal Mint. Copper Tokens were issued about 1601 by the Cities of Oxford, Worcester, and Bristol. In 1613, a patent for the issue of farthing Tokens was granted by James I. to Lord Harrington, who shared with the Crown the large profits derived from the difference between the nominal and intrinsic value of the coinage. The intention and use of these "Harrington Farthings" was thus described by their principal distributor: "The necessitye of these small moneys did appear here with us in England, where everie chandler, tapster, vintner and others made tokens of lead and brasse for halfpence. Hereupon it pleased our Sovereigne Lord the King to approve of the making of a competent quantitie of farthing tokens to abolish the said leaden tokens made in derogation of the King's prerogative royall. And the said farthing tokens have not oneley beene found very commodious and necessarie for

* I recently found in my garden one of these, which has a rough design of a cross with a pellet in each quarter on one side, the other side being quite plain.

“pettie commutations but also to be a great reliefe to the poore, and means to encrease charitie.”

The Office for the issue of these Royal Tokens was in Lothbury, and the place is still known as “Token-house Yard.”

Patents were afterwards granted by Charles I. under which similar farthing tokens to those of his Predecessor were issued, and attempts were made to establish a more satisfactory copper coinage, several patterns being struck with that object, but never issued for circulation.

The issue of these farthings by James I. and Charles I. seems to have had little effect in stopping the circulation of private Tokens, which continued to be general throughout the Country.

During the Commonwealth and under the Protector patterns of farthings were prepared, but do not appear to have been put in circulation. The legends on some of them (dated 1649 and 1651) indicate their necessity at that time, the following inscriptions appearing on these pattern farthings:—“For necessity of change,” “For necessary change,” “Charitie and change,” “Convenient change,” etc.

The above slight sketch of the previous history of the minor coinage will indicate the circumstances under which the 17th Century Trade Tokens made their appearance.

From one end of the Kingdom to the other these Tokens were, generally speaking, of similar appearance and type, though differing in detail, and any one who has given any attention at all to the subject would recognize at a glance a Seventeenth Century Trade Token. They usually represented halfpennies and farthings, and are small and thin, and very often of poor design. In shape, the large majority are round, but in some cases they are heart shaped, square, diamond shaped, or octagonal.

The earliest recorded date of issue is 1648, and the latest 1672, the most prolific years being 1665 to 1669, particularly 1666 (the year of the Great Fire of London); in 1670 and 1671 they became very scarce, and of 1672 there are very few.

In Bucks the earliest date is 1651 and the latest 1671.

Mr. Boyne states that the system of trading with these Tokens was that tradesmen kept boxes in different divisions, into which the Tokens of other tradesmen, received in the course of business, were sorted, and when a sufficient number were collected from time to time they were returned to the issuers to be exchanged for silver.

The general type of the Bucks series is very similar to that of other Counties. They have been carefully catalogued by Mr. Ratcliff, and a copy of his Catalogue can be seen at our Museum. Dies have also been prepared by him for printing illustrations of a large number.

In a note in a new and revised edition of Mr. Boyne's work under the head of Buckinghamshire, the Editor (Mr. George C. Williamson) states that "he has been unable to find any Collector specially interesting himself in the Tokens of Buckinghamshire. The County has never yet had the benefit of systematic research as to its Tokens." In this edition only 179 Bucks Tokens are specified, and seeing that Mr. Ratcliff describes 203, of which number his collection contains no less than 191, it is evident that Mr. Ratcliff has gone much further than the Editor of Mr. Boyne's work was aware of.

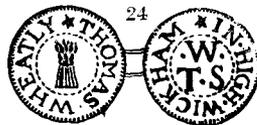
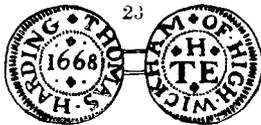
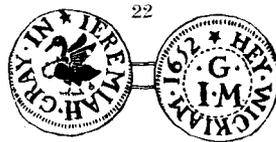
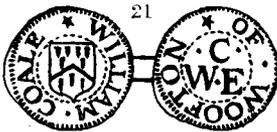
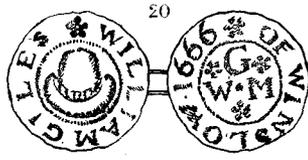
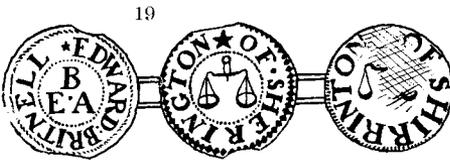
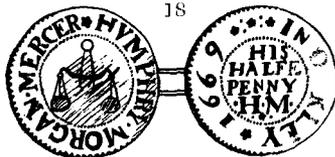
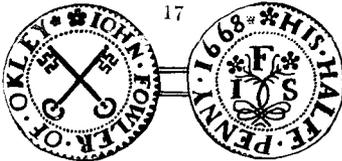
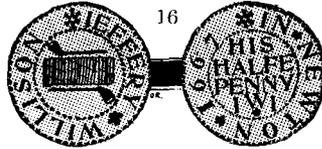
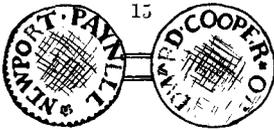
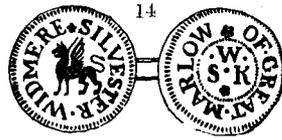
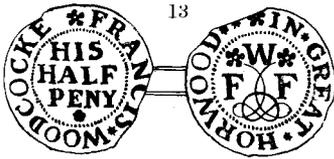
The following Tokens, specimens of which are in the Ratcliff Collection in our Museum at Aylesbury, and several of which are illustrated on the attached Plates, are not published in Williamson's latest Edition of Boyne:—

*Nos. in Mr.
Ratcliff's List.*

9	See	Plate I	(1).
14	„	„	„ (2).
19	„	„	„ (3).
28a	„	„	„ (4).
31a	„	„	„ (5).
35	„	„	„ (6).
38	„	„	„ (7).
40	„	„	„ (8).

This is a variety of Boyne's
No. 32.

Bucks xvii. Century Trade Tokens.



- 13. Great Horwood. R 82.
- 15. Newport Pagnell. R 109.
- 17. Oakley. R 119.
- 19. Sherington. R 133.
- 21. Woughton. R 174.
- 23. Wycombe. R 185.

- 14. Marlow. R 100.
- 16. Newton Longville. R 117.
- 18. Oakley. R 120.
- 20. Winslow. R 168.
- 22. Wycombe. R 182. B 163.
- 24. Wycombe. R 198.

- 42 This is a variety of Boyne's No. 36 without the I.E.R.
- 56 " " " " " " 49 with a smaller roll of tobacco.
- 61 See Plate I (11).
- 64 This is a variety of Boyne's No. 55.
- 76 " " " " " " 67.
- 82 See Plate II. (13).
- 92 This is a variety of Boyne's No. 83.
- 100 See Plate II (14). This is a variety of Boyne's No. 90.
- 109 See Plate II (15). This is a variety of Boyne's No. 98.
- 117 See Plate II (16).
- 119 " " " (17).
- 120 " " " (18).
- 123 This is a variety of Boyne's No. 108.
- 127 This is a variety of Boyne's No. 111.
- 133 See Plate II (19). This is a variety of Boyne's No. 116, with a different reverse as shown on the Plate.
- 168 " " " (20).
- 174 " " " (21).
- 185 " " " (23). This is a variety of Boyne's No. 165, but of smaller size, probably intended for a farthing.
- 192
- 198 See Plate II (24).

Amongst the devices on the Tokens the Arms of Trade Guilds or Companies were often portrayed, Bucks examples shewing the Arms of the following Trades:—

Bakers
 Brewers
 Clothworkers
 Cordwainers
 Drapers
 Grocers
 Gunmakers
 Haberdashers
 Joiners
 Mercers.

The following Bucks specimens are of special interest:—

Nos.

Ratcliff. Boyne.

9	—	<i>Aylesbury</i>	} These are square in shape (See R 9, Plate I (1)).
131	115	<i>Princes Risborough</i>	

55	49	} <i>Chesham</i> —These are heart shaped (See R 55, B 49, Plate I (10)).
56	—	

62	54	<i>Chesham</i> —This is octagonal (not in the Ratcliff Collection).
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The remainder are circular in form.

13	12	} <i>Aylesbury</i> —These are particularly interesting, the old King's Head remaining to this day practically in the same state as it was when it issued its own coinage in 1657 (See R 14, Plate I (2)).
14	—	

25	22	} <i>Beaconsfield.</i> The figure of a Cock upon this token to represent the name of the issuer, Thomas Cocke, appears to be a rebus.

41	36	} <i>Buckingham.</i> These are interesting as referring to the manufacture of lace, with which industry the County and Town of Bucking- ham are so closely identified (See R 43, B 37, Plate I (9)).
42	—	
43	37	

75	67	} These were issued by Carriers and are un- usual, the calling of Carriers being seldom represented on Trade Tokens (see illustration of the Haddenham Token, R 75, B 67, Plate I (12)).
155	137	

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|--|
| 106 | 96 | } | <i>Newport Pagnell.</i> This Token is made of lead, and is very rare. I noticed one in Messrs. Sotheby's Catalogue of the Macfadyen Sale in July 1907, and told Mr. Ratcliff of it; he was unable to secure the original, but he borrowed it and obtained a casting. |
| 165 | 147 | } | <i>Winslow.</i> IOHN CRAWLY and IO. DIMOCK is a Partnership Token. |
| 182 | 163 | } | <i>Wycombe.</i> This Token may be of interest to Students of heraldry, having upon it the Swan which has been used as our heraldic emblem in Bucks. (See Plate II (22)). |

There is a Token of Mursley (R 101, B 91), the issuer of which is named by Boyne as Pitman, but his name is in fact Pitkin.

The spelling on the inscriptions is very curious owing partly to the unsettled state of English orthography of the period, and probably also in some cases to the defective education of the persons who issued the Tokens. "His halfe peny" is of frequent occurrence, and the names of places are various. For instance, Aylesbury is spelt on different Tokens:—

AILSBVRY
 AYLSBVRY
 AYLESBVRY
 ALSBVRY
 ALEISBVRY
 AILLSBVREY
 AYELSBVRY
 ALESBVRY
 ALISBVRY

Amersham is spelt:—

AMMARSHAM
AMERSHAM
AMERSAME
AMERSAM
AMARSHAM

Beaconsfield is spelt:—

BECKENSFEILD
BECKONSFEILD
BECKONESFEILD

Buckingham is in one instance spelt
BUCKINGGAM.

Chesham CHASSHAM and CHESHAME.

Chalfont St. Peter PEETERS SHALFORT.

Eton is spelt EATON in every instance.

Newport Pagnell, NEWPORT PANNELL in three instances.

Wycombe is spelt:—

WICKHAM
WIKCOMBE
HIE WICKHAM
HEY WICKHAM
GREAT WICKOMBE
HIGH WICKHAM
WICOME

The spelling of the names of other places is equally eccentric.

The places of issue were often comparatively small villages, and in many instances the names upon the Tokens are still found amongst the present inhabitants of the different localities.

These Tokens, which originated with public necessity, in the end became a nuisance, and were ultimately put down by a stringent Royal Proclamation dated the 16th August, 1672, on which date commenced the regal coinage of milled copper halfpennies and farthings, the series of which, with some interruptions, has continued through the succeeding reigns up to the present day.

In conclusion, it may be well to draw attention to the few known specimens which are still wanting in the Bucks collection, in the hope that some reader of the RECORDS may be able to supply some of them.

The following Tokens are not at present represented:—

Nos.

Ratcliff's. Boyne's.

3	3	Amersham. Francis Lane 1666.
62	54	Chesham. Thomas S. Chessham 1668 (octagonal)
68	59	Eton. Thomas Collings—A fleur de lis —1667.
94	85	Marlow. Stephen Harris.
106	96	Newport Pagnell. John Childe 1667 (lead Token).
107	97	Newport Pagnell. Edward Cooper.
131	115	Princes Risborough. Thomas Headeach 1669 (square).
132	—*	Shenley. Joseph Inns 1670.
137	119	Stony Stratford. Francis Anderton.
176	156	Wycombe. Thomas Bates 1661.
179	160	Wycombe. Tho. Dimarsh 1668.

The enormous output of private Trade Tokens in the latter part of the 18th Century does not come within the scope of the present article.

WM. CROUCH.

FRIARSCROFT, AYLESBURY,

August, 1912.

* Boyne assigns this Token to Shenley, in Hertfordshire, but Ratcliff includes it in the Bucks series, to which he has satisfactorily proved it to belong. (See Ratcliff's History and Antiquities of the Newport Hundreds, p. 565.)