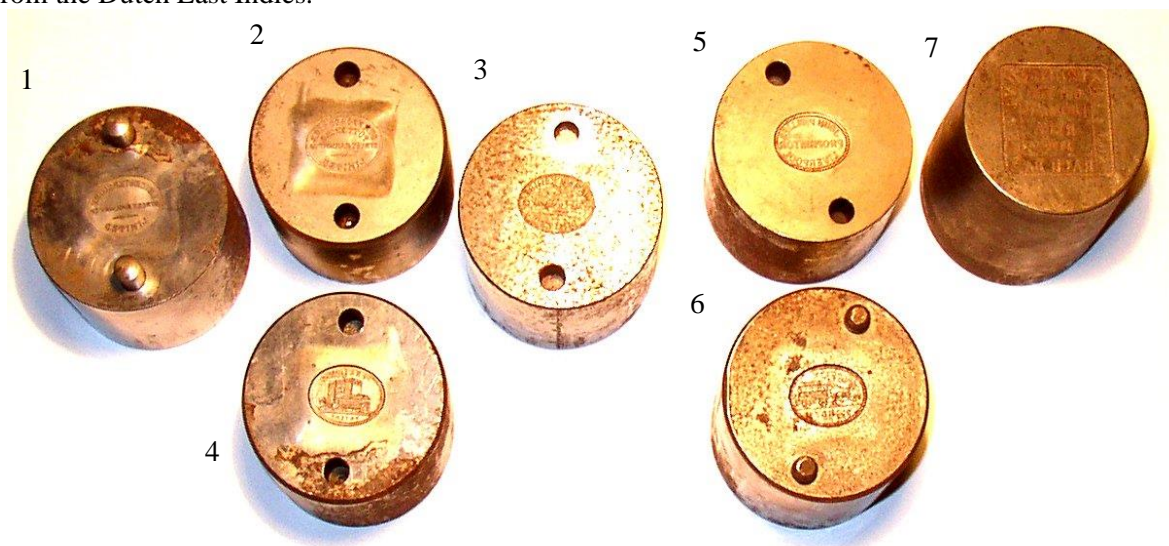


A Group of Dies for Fantasy Tokens

Gary Oddie

Recently a group of seven dies appeared on the market. Four of the dies form a group that produced fantasy transport tokens sometime between 1967 and 1990. Two dies produced a fantasy transport token sometime between 1990 and 2016. The final die was used to produce a previously unrecognised fantasy tobacco plantation token from the Dutch East Indies.



Each die is illustrated (50%) and a separate image of the die face is shown along with a mirrored image and a specimen of the token (100%).

#1 LEICESTERSHIRE STREET RAILWAY CO⁰ LIMITED



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.6 mm, height 50.2 mm, with a very smooth outer surface. Two steel dowels protrude from the die face to locate opposing die. This is the obverse die of a fantasy token listed as Leicestershire 451YA in Smith and Smith⁽¹⁾.

#2 STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES STREET RAILWAY CO⁰ LIMITED



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.2 mm at the die face and 64.3 at the base, height 47.3 mm, with a rough lathed outer surface and a small step at half height. Two holes are present to receive dowels from the opposing die. This is the obverse die of a fantasy token listed as Stoke-on-Trent 730YA in Smith and Smith⁽¹⁾.

#3 WARWICKSHIRE STREET RAILWAY CO⁰ LIMITED



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.6 mm, height 52.2 mm, with a very smooth outer surface. Two holes are present to receive dowels from the opposing die. This is the obverse die of a fantasy token listed as Warwickshire 823YA in Smith and Smith⁽¹⁾.

#4 TRAIN'S PATENT around a horsecar and Marble Arch



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.4 mm at the die face and 64.3 at the base, height 46.3 mm, with a rough lathed outer surface and a small step at half height. Two holes are present to receive dowels from the opposing die. This is the reverse die of a fantasy token listed as; Leicestershire 451YA, Stoke-on-Trent 730YA and Warwickshire 823YA in Smith and Smith⁽¹⁾.

There is a characteristic oval die flaw in the outer rim⁽²⁾ which gives away the method of manufacture as a CNC milling machine. This also explains the letter forms and sans serif fonts. When looking closely at the die, the crescent shaped milling marks can be seen



#5 JOHN PHILLIPS PROPRIETOR LIVERPOOL



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.6 mm, height 55.6 mm, with a very smooth outer surface. Two holes are present to receive dowels from the opposing die. This is the obverse die of a fantasy token copying Smith and Smith 470D⁽¹⁾. Not catalogued in 1990, but noted in 2013⁽²⁾.

#6 CITY OMNIBUS a horse car with driver and passengers



The die is cylindrical, diameter 64.6 mm, height 55.6 mm, with a very smooth outer surface. Two steel dowels protrude from the die face to locate opposing die. This is the reverse die of a fantasy token copying Smith and Smith 470D⁽¹⁾. Not catalogued in 1990, but noted in 2013⁽²⁾.

#7 UNTERNEHMUNG GOERACH BATOE around GUT FUR 1 DOLLAR REIS 1890



The die has a cylindrical base with a very smooth outer surface, 64.6 mm diameter. This has been lathed to taper to 59.8 mm at the die face. The die is 71.5 mm high. This is a plantation token of the Dutch East Indies (LaBe 87⁽³⁾, LaWe 96⁽⁴⁾) and has been listed as a pattern in the most recent catalogue, even appearing on the front cover⁽³⁾. All known specimens of the token are uniface.

The Lansen specimen was sold at auction in 2012⁽⁵⁾. The piece can be distinguished from the official issue by the stars in the legend (5 rather than 6 points) and the serif on the “1” (short and slightly sloping rather than long and steeply sloping). A more recent website warns of “modern forgeries” of the plantation money of the Dutch East Indies but gives no more details⁽⁷⁾.

Conclusions

The first four dies provide a complete set for three fantasy transport tokens that were not listed in the 1967 book by Smith⁽⁶⁾ but had been catalogued in 1990 by Smith and Smith⁽¹⁾. These pieces regularly appear on the market, and though their fantasy status is known^(1,6) it is rarely mentioned.

Dies 5 and 6 produced another fantasy transport token not known in 1990⁽¹⁾, but noted in 2013⁽²⁾.

It is highly likely that the plantation token from the Dutch East Indies is also a previously unrecognised fantasy piece from the same source. It appears to be cut from the same steel bar as the transport tokens (diameter and surface finish) and dates to a century later than the official plantation token issue.

As might be expected the dies have no provenance but it is likely that other dies will exist from the same source.

References and Acknowledgements

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