

# Poor Quality Control at Kempson's Manufactory?

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**Fig. 1.** Obverse and reverse Suffolk, D&H 35 (Photo from DNW).

Recently I was fortunate enough to obtain the 18<sup>th</sup> century halfpenny illustrated in Fig. 1 at a DNW auction, 4-5 May, 2021, Lot 886. The obverse and reverse are dies from a common issue of James Conder of Ipswich, recorded in Dalton and Hamer as Suffolk, DH 35. The token was struck by Kempson in Birmingham and is dated 1794.

Intriguingly, the cataloguer had listed the token as (DH-[dies of 35,edge unlisted]). The edge inscription was correctly described as “PAYABLE AT THE WAREHOUSES OF D•WRIGHT & S•PALMER” a reading not noted by Dalton and Hamer in their varieties of DH 35. Limited by my photographic ability the edge is shown in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2.** Edge reading.

In one sense the cataloguer's comment “edge unlisted” is correct. The edge is not listed as belonging to Suffolk DH 35. A little further research, however, reveals that this edge inscription belongs to another common Kempson token this time of Wainfleet, Lincolnshire DH8 dated 1793. No mention of this additional attribution appears in the auction catalogue although the token is described as “extremely rare”

Assuming that the blanks were edged before the tokens were struck it would appear that some blank, but edged, pieces were left over from the Wainfleet issue and, by mistake, a least one found its way into the Ipswich manufacturing process.

The possibility exists that this token could have been made to satisfy the avid collectors of the period, but this was normally done in the form of mules between obverse and reverse. It would seem to be unusual to find a well-known token “muled” with an edge from a different issue. The author would be interested in any comments from more knowledgeable token collectors than I.

My thanks are due to Gary Oddie who helped the writer by providing his usual perceptive comments.

