

# An Overlooked Series of English Card Tickets c.1811

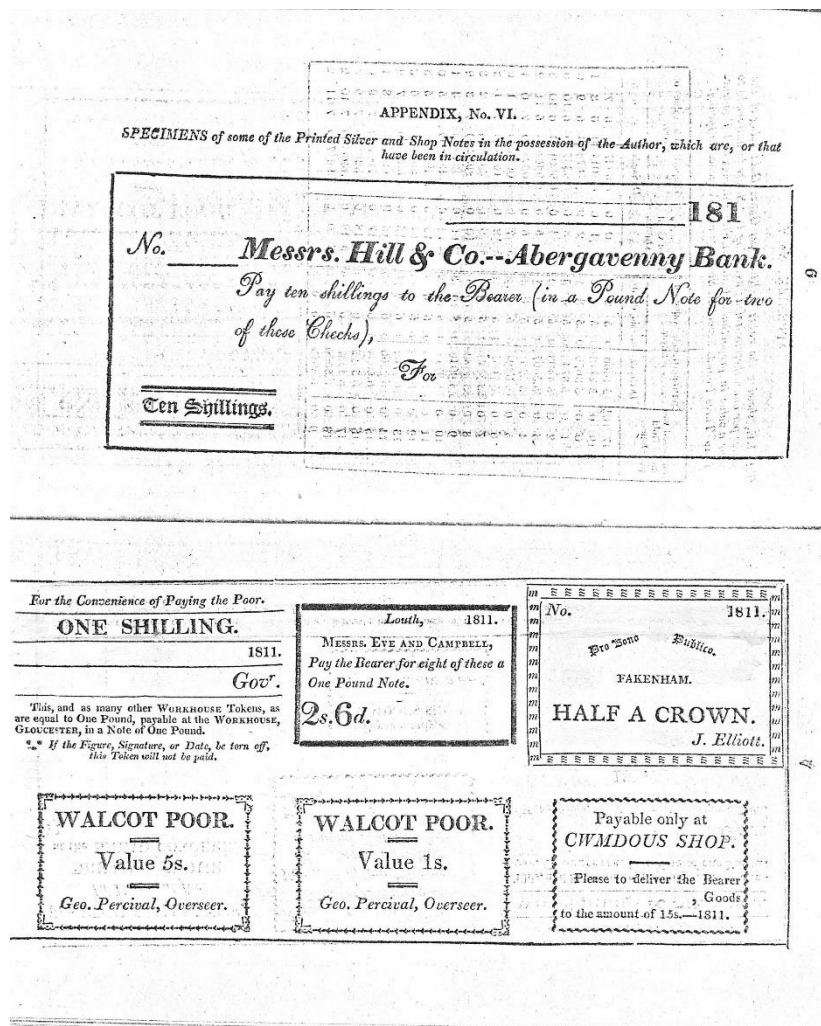
Gary Oddie

## Introduction

Having collected all things related to the value 'one shilling' for many decades, ranging from regal coins to counterfeits to tokens and all sorts of ephemera including banknotes, postal orders and tickets, it is not often that I bump into a whole new series that I didn't know existed - but maybe should have suspected.

At the 2021 Token Congress, I was handed a plastic bag full of various photographs by Melinda Mays. They had been used as part of the production of her father James O'Donald Mays' excellent book about the silver tokens issued by tradesmen, workhouses, bankers and shopkeepers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(1)</sup> This book brought together background details of the people and places that issued tokens, taking pieces from several counties in each section rather than the strict county order used in the original 1922 catalogue by Richard Dalton.<sup>(2)</sup>

Amongst the pile of photos was a photocopied section of a book, starting at page 6 with the title Appendix VI and finishing with Appendix X covering pages 25-29. The photocopies were on legal (216×356mm) paper which I haven't seen for decades! Figure 1 shows the first page cropped to the printed page.



**Fig. 1.** 'Appendix, No. VI. SPECIMENS of some of the Printed Silver and Shop Notes in the possession of the Author, which are, or that have been in circulation.' Not to scale.

The first reaction was to notice the 'one shilling' tickets and then to realise that I have not seen any of these tickets anywhere before. The immediate question arose – where was this copied from?

Looking through the pages, the copy comprises Appendices VI, VII, IX and X as follows:

- VI Specimens of some of the Printed Silver and Shop Notes in the possession of the Author, which are, or that have been in circulation. [Reproduces images of 11 notes, within the limits of the engraver and a footnote 'The number of Engraved Silver and Shop Notes in use is great.']
- VII An Account of the Value of Shillings and Sixpences in Circulation in the year 1807. . . [A quantity of shillings and sixpences had been taken from circulation and assessed. The average weight was significantly below standard, as was the weight.]
- IX Table showing the amount of weight in the denominative value of One Shilling of each of the local silver currencies issued throughout Great Britain. . . [Eleven pages of tables listing 116 issues of silver tokens, their weights and fineness of silver and hence actual value. This is a home-made photocopy of a tightly bound book, so some entries have been lost in the hinge.]
- X Extracts from various communications on the subject on the state of the silver currency throughout the kingdom. . . [Letters from Bristol, Hull, York, Bridlington, Chichester etc. etc. and a short note from the Bank of England all dated 1812-13.]

The material in Appendix VI was new to me. The wear data of Appendix VII was not included in my analysis of the state of the state of the silver coins of this period presented in 1995<sup>(3)</sup>, but is used by Kevin Clancy in his PhD Thesis a few years later.<sup>(4)</sup> The thesis reference to the data is given as the Public Record Office.<sup>(5)</sup> The pagination is wrong, so this is likely a different (primary?) source of the 1807 wear data.

Appendix IX is an impressive piece of analysis of a good proportion of the silver token issues and is not mentioned in Mays<sup>(1)</sup> or the most recent extensive analysis of the metal content of the silver tokens of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(6)</sup> Gilmore and Berry used neutron analysis of a small sample filed from the edge of the coin to determine the metal content, but the data in Appendix IX would have resulted in the complete destruction of some very rare tokens! A Mr North of the York Assay Office assayed 31 tokens and two Bank Dollars and published his results in the 1812 Annual Register. The original has not been seen, but the results were reprinted in 1876-7<sup>(7)</sup> and in Gilmore and Berry.<sup>(6)</sup>

A quick look at Appendix X and the problem is solved. Recognising all the place names, these pages present the replies to the questionnaire sent out by Lord Lauderdale to the various issuers of the silver tokens. A quick Google and 0.52 seconds later a link to a colour scan of the complete Lauderdale report is found.<sup>(8)</sup> The photocopies are indeed taken from the Lauderdale report of 1813.

Lauderdale was very active in parliamentary discussions and publications about the currency, both metallic and paper and was very aware of the necessity of the silver and base metal tokens for the running of trade, especially in the absence of any official output from the mint. He argued against the banning of silver tokens prior to the introduction of sufficient good silver coins, but was outvoted. The Bank of England silver tokens only partially filled the gap between 1814 and the silver issues of the recoinage in 1816-17.

A previous blog note looked at the low denomination notes issued by banks and businesses around this period.<sup>(9)</sup> With just 26 notes denominated at 5/- or less, these are all larger sized notes on thin paper and are found in Roger Outing's excellent book.<sup>(1)</sup> None of the 'banknotes' look anything like the pieces illustrated in Lauderdale, which are much smaller and simpler in design.

It would appear that we have a previously unrecognised series of paper or card low denomination notes or tickets that were in use in mainland England at around the same time as the silver token issues.

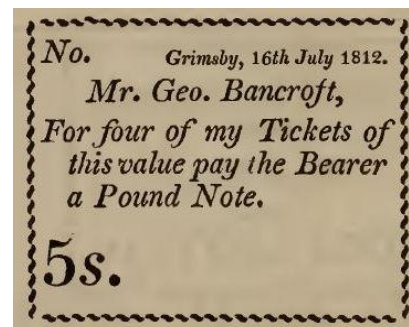
The following pages will illustrate all of the pieces from Lauderdale along with brief background details found for some of the issuers. The images may not be quite accurate, for example missing some finer details, as Lauderdale noted, because of the limitations of his engravers. The images have been taken from the online .pdf and the dimensions estimated from the photocopy. Brief notes are added from genealogical and newspaper archives for likely candidates for the issuers.

This will be followed by sections describing some possible precedents that are known and also the large series of card tokens issued by traders in the Isle of Man at around the same period. These were all intended to compensate for the shortage of silver specie in circulation.

## The Lauderdale Tickets

**Geo Bancroft, Grimsby, 5/-, 1812.** (54x43 mm)

Genealogical searches reveal one candidate b.1787 d.1826



**The Bread Concern, Bristol, 5/-, 1811.** (53x39mm)

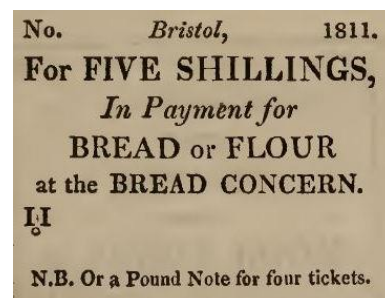
Several notes in the Bristol Mirror about companies with this and similar names:

Saturday 27 January 1810 – request for builders to repair building of Bristol Flour and Bread Concern, situated in the Horse Fair.

Saturday 10 February 1816 – shares in Bristol Bread Concern for sale.

Saturday 11 July 1829 – shares £3 each

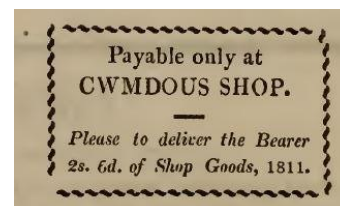
Saturday 13 August 1831 – shares to be sold in The New Bread Concern



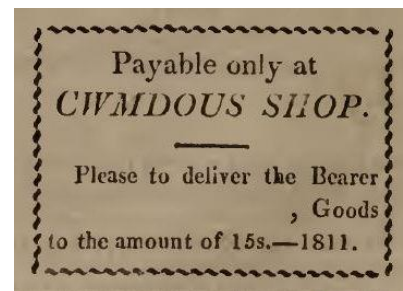
**Cwmdous Shop, [Monmouth], 2/6, 1811.** (44x27mm)

Very interesting report from 1842 on wages, the truck system, food prices, profiteering, and child labour and education in the works at Cwmdous

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Reports from Select Committees of the\\_Ho/thFcAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=cwmdous+shop&pg=RA4-PA108&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Reports_from_Select_Committees_of_the_Ho/thFcAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=cwmdous+shop&pg=RA4-PA108&printsec=frontcover)



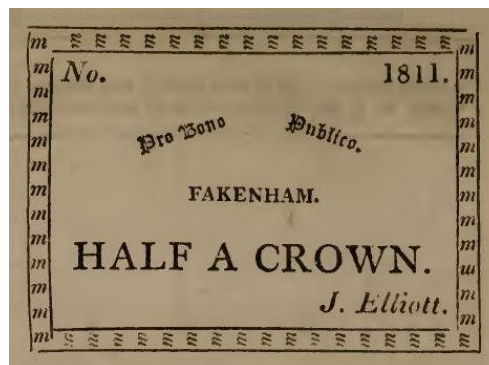
**Cwmdous Shop, [Monmouth], 15/-, 1811.** (53x38mm).



**J. Elliott, Fakenham, 2/6, 1811.** (67x48mm)

Norfolk Chronicle - Saturday 18 April 1807 – announcement for the Fakenham Provident Society, for the benefit of widows and orphans. Secretary J. Elliott.

Norfolk Chronicle - Saturday 15 April 1809 – similar.



**Eve and Campbell, Louth, 2/6, 1811.** (40x57mm).

The following are all found in the Stamford Mercury.

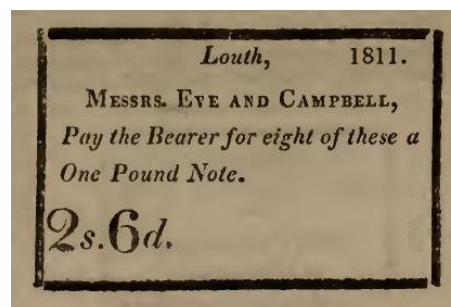
Friday 6 May 1808 – Bankers.

Friday 26 April 1811 – Messrs Eve and Campbell, Mercers, Drapers and Grocers, Louth want an apprentice.

Friday 11 September 1812 – Linen and Woollen Drapers and Grocers.

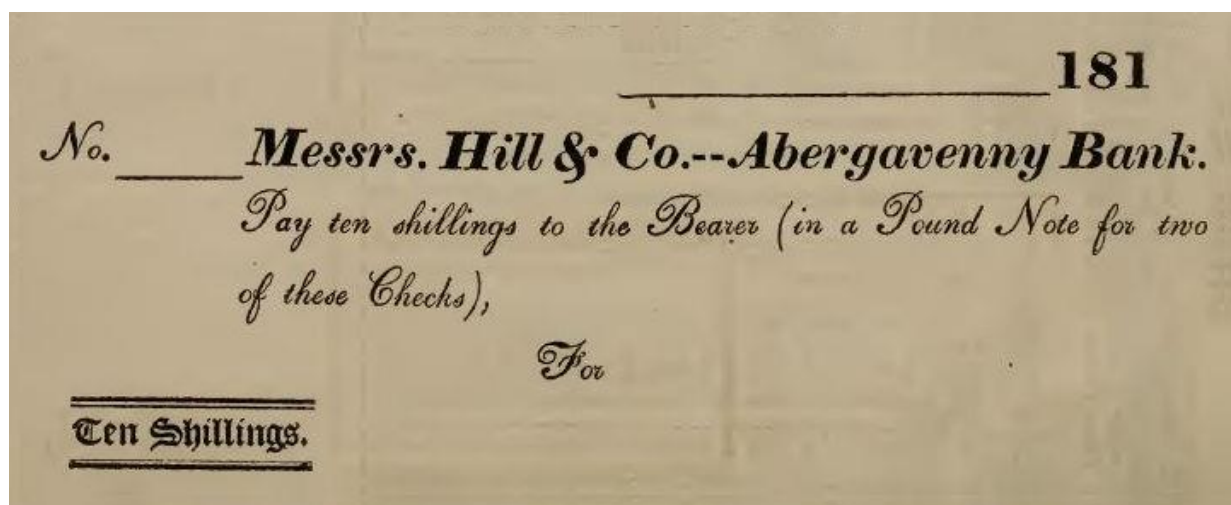
Friday 22 November 1822 – shop is a landmark.

Friday 6 February 1829 – Mr Wm. Eve of the firm Eve and Campbell (mercers and drapers) died after a lingering illness.



**Hill & Co, Abergavenny, 10/-, 181-.** (163x66mm).

This piece is the closest to a banknote that appears in the Lauderdale images, but lacks any attempts at security printing. This absence may be a limitation of the engravers used by Lauderdale.



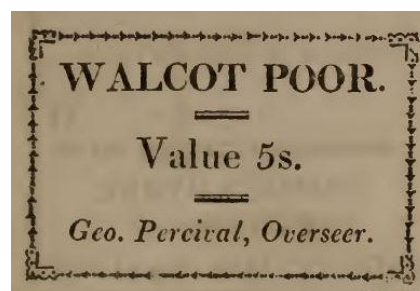
Hill & Co listed in Outing (Cat. No. 7) with dates 1796-c.1801 (not seen).<sup>(10)</sup>

Abergavenny Chronicle 18 August 1916 (100 years ago) On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1813 the committee were ordered to contract with Messrs Hill and Co. for 820 yards of 5 inch bore iron pipe at the weight per pipe of two yards length 1cw.t 2 qrs. 11lb.

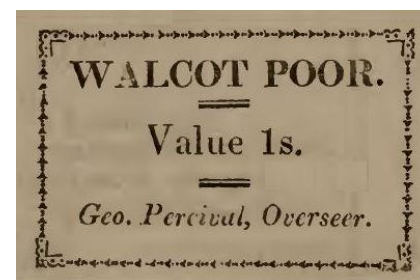
**Walcot Poor, [Bath], 5/-, nd.** (55x38mm)

Walcot is the largest parish in Bath. The workhouse was recorded as early as 1777 when it had 100 inmates and was located on the south side of London Road. The front was rebuilt in 1828 retaining the two long rear 18<sup>th</sup> century wings in Weymouth Street. Following the Poor Law Amendment Act the building was sold and after a time as a school and retail premises has now been converted into residences.

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Bath/>

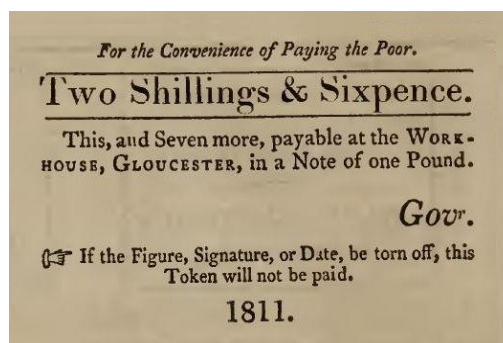


**Walcot Poor, [Bath], 1/-, nd.** (55x38mm)

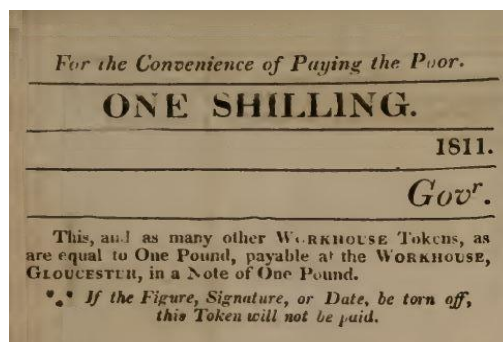


### **The Workhouse, Gloucester, 2/6, 1811. (67x45mm).**

Following two early failed attempts, a workhouse at Gloucester was set up in 1764 and by 1776 could house up to 200 inmates. The principal employment was in pin making, the aged and infirm would pick oakum (separating tarry hemp fibres for caulking ships and sealing pipe joints) and the women did washing, brewing and household work. <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Gloucester/>



### **The Workhouse, Gloucester, 1/-, 1811. (67x45mm).**



## **Mainland Precedents**

### **John Wilkinson, Brosely, 1774.**

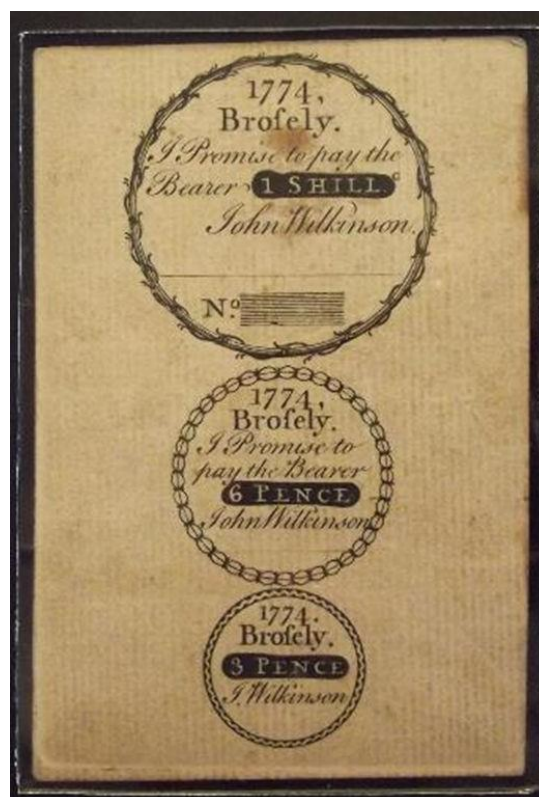
On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1797, John Wilkinson wrote to Matthew Boulton "I am engaged in preparing small notes for my workmen as change, similar to what I issued in '73 and '74 previous to Sir George Savile's Act. That was a measure I then adopted on the great scarcity of silver, which since has been plentifully supplied by the coiners of bad money. Good notes will cure the evil of base metal better and more effectively than the gallows." The ban resulting from Savile's Act of 1775 was not due to be lifted until 1798. Wilkinson's brother, in a letter to Watt on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1797, describes these notes as "a new coinage of 1/-, 6d. and 3d. notes on cards is issued from J.W.'s Mint and [they] are to circulate on next pay day, the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. at Brymbo and Bersham."<sup>(11)</sup>

These cards were unknown until a sheet of 'test?' pulls/prints were sold on ebay on August 21, 2011.

This piece has a provenance through direct descent in the Wilkinson family, ultimately surfacing in the USA.<sup>(12)</sup> Its place amongst the Wilkinson token issues has been published elsewhere.<sup>(13)</sup>

Thanks to Ed. Moore for the image and permission to use. The whole card is 61x95mm.

Contemporary records also suggest many other manufacturers were issuing low denomination notes and tickets, though none have been seen recently.<sup>(14)</sup>



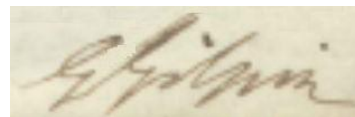
## Gilbert Gilpin, Bersham, 1792.

There have also been suggestions that some paymasters were issuing notes in the 1790s similar to the assignats then in circulation in France. There were debates in Parliament on the topic.<sup>(15)</sup> The well-known token issuer (18<sup>th</sup>C copper and 19<sup>th</sup>C silver) Gilbert Gilpin is named in one letter from Peter Whitehall Davies to Chief Justice Kenyon.<sup>(16)</sup>

[Entry 1373.] 1792, December 19. Broughton. – “I take the liberty to trouble your Lordship with another letter, in which I have inclosed an *assignat*, made payable at Bersham Furnace, endorsed ‘Gilbert Gilpin’; I am informed he is the first clerk of Mr. Wilkinson, whose sister married Doctor Priestly. With what view Mr. Wilkinson circulates *assignats*, is best known to himself. It appears to me that good consequences cannot arise from their being made currant, and that very pernicious effects may. Mr. Wilkinson, at his foundry in Bersham (Where, I am informed, he has now a very large number of cannon), and in his coal and lead mines, employs a considerable body of men. They are regularly paid every Saturday with *assignats*. The Presbyterian tradesmen receive them in payment for goods, by which intercourse they have frequent opportunities to corrupt the principles of that description of men, by infusing into their minds the pernicious tenets of Paine’s Rights of Man, upon whose book I am told, publick lectures are delivered to a considerable number in the neighbourhood of Wrexham, by a Methodist. The bad effects of them are too evident in that parish.”

A note in the handwriting of Chief Justice Kenyon.- “This letter occasioned the Act of Parliament, passed in January 1793, for preventing the negotiation of French paper money in England.”

No notes of any sort signed by Gilbert Gilpin are now known, but his autograph can be found on several pieces of correspondence.



## Birmingham Workhouse, [1808 or earlier], 2/6, 5/-, £1 and £5.

Several notes are known from the Birmingham Workhouse many with incomplete date 180-, unsigned and un-numbered (Outing 3009). There are several varieties for each denomination 2/6, 5/-, £1 and £5, all printed on very thin paper. The piece below is dated 1802, but is un-numbered and unsigned.



102x 84mm (DNW, 7 Oct 2009, lot 329, Thanks to Andrew Wager)

From their design, fine engraving and some on watermarked paper, they are closer to banknotes than the tickets described in Lauderdale.

**Adam Eve & Co, Louth, [1811] 2/6 (no more details).**

On p228 of Cobbett's Political register of 24 August 1811— paper money; appears the following.<sup>(17)</sup>

‘At Louth, in Lincolnshire, a company of carpet manufacturers, named Adam Eve & Co. have issued Notes for 2s 6d. These notes are mere printed cards (just like the assignats in France), payable to bearer; but, mark! Not payable generally, but specifically in *Bank Notes*. Thus: “Pay the bearer for “eight of these notes a one pound Bank Note.” And here, then, it all hangs together in a string! I have frequently said, that *to these small notes we must come*. I have all along said it. It is the regular, the natural, the inevitable progress; and, such notes we shall see in every part of the kingdom.

This Mr. Adam Eve seems to be the founder of the half crown notes. Not a bad name for an *original* inventor. His notes are veritable *assignats*. They are just such things as they used to have in France. They will breed amazingly; and, I dare say that Mr. Adam Eve will see the country people at Louth market with thousands and thousands of the progeny in their pocket books of a denomination down so low as that of a half penny.’

On p229 the author continues, requesting a specimen, as he does not possess one.

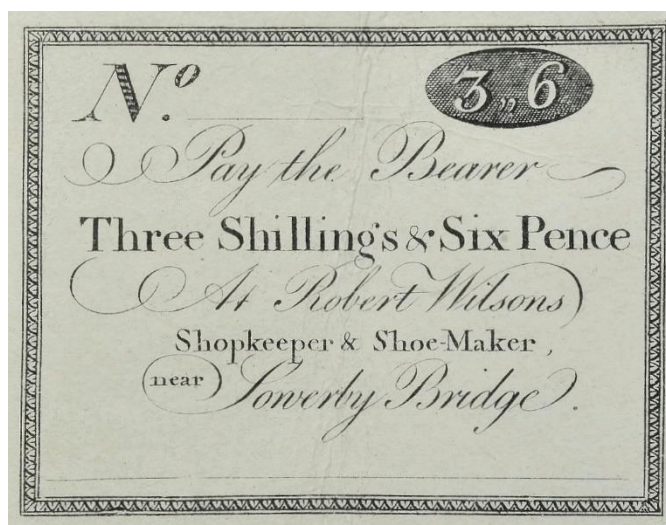
‘I should be much obliged to anyone who would send me one of Mr. Adam Eve’s little note; and to any other person who would send me one of the “necessary change” pieces from Bristol. [referring to silver tokens on p228]. It is not for the ‘base lucre’ of the thing; but I have a desire to possess memorials of the progress of the grand event that is approaching. I have some of the *forged assignats*, and I should like to have one of Adam Eve’s to keep them company. But, as to Mr. Adam Eve, he might, I think, send me from himself a quire or two of his money. It costs him nothing but the paper and print; and, if it were only as a brother author he might afford me so trifling a gratification.’

This may refer to the note illustrated by Lauderdale, however as it explicitly states the name Adam, is likely a different piece.

### **Robert Wilson, Sowerby Bridge, nd.**

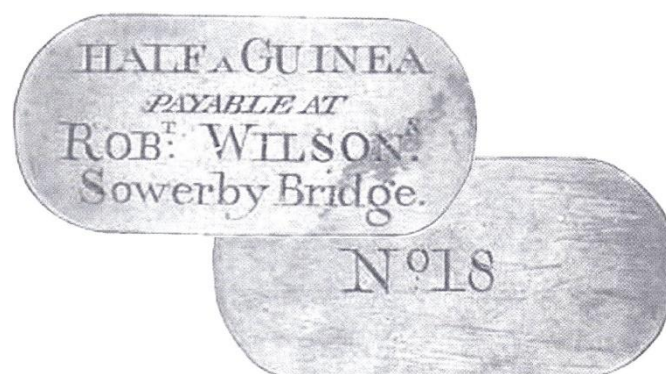
This ticket came with an envelope in the hand of S.H. Hamer, stating “Recently taken impression from the Copper plate used by Robert Wilson of Sowerby Bridge, to print his promissory notes for 3 Shillings & Six pence.

(DNW 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019, lot 909.) Not to scale and image cropped.



This Robert Wilson also issued engraved tokens for seven shillings and a half guinea both Ae, 62x30mm, rounded oblong with engraved number on the reverse. Being in fractions of a Guinea they will date before 1817 and the issue of sovereigns. Withers gives Robert Wilson 1760-1808, leather trader. A likely son, also Robert Wilson of Sowerby Bridge, can be found in local newspapers as a saddler from 1828.

(Withers Token Book 2539 and 2540, D&W p339 50 and 50a., both in the Hamer collection. Ex Noble 26 November 2003, lot 2197.).



## The Isle of Man Series

The first catalogue of the card money that circulated in the Isle of Man was published by Charles Clay.<sup>(18)</sup> He lists denominations ranging from 3d to 1/- and that the dates range 1805-1817, after which they were no longer allowed to circulate following an act of Tynwald in 1817.<sup>(19)</sup> Clay lists many pieces no longer known and of the surviving pieces, most are known by one or two specimens, mostly in the Manx Museum. The most recent catalogue lists 71 issuers and illustrates 37 of the 111 known varieties.<sup>(20)</sup> Two examples are illustrated below.

### J[ohn] Beatson, Douglas, [1811-14].

Printer and Publisher in Douglas.

Formed a bank in partnership with George Copeland in 1811. Agent for the Atlas Fire Company. On Beatson's death in 1814, Copeland redeemed all of the Beatson card tickets.

(West and Kelly M101a). GO.



### J[ohn] Bowstead, Kirk Andrews, Sept 1 1815.

Browse Kirk Andrews Isle of Man. The shilling of this issuer is the commonest card ticket to have survived with at least one hoard and around 100 specimens known. Dates range from 12 Jan 1814 to 1 Feb 1816.

(West and Kelly M103a). GO.



## Discussion and Conclusions

The chance find and revisiting of the Lauderdale report of 1813 has revealed a previously unrecognised series of low denomination printed tickets that must have once been commonplace throughout mainland England. There are a few tantalising hints of other card and paper replacements for small silver, with proofs of a 1774 card issue by John Wilkinson and assignats from Gilbert Gilpin amongst others, but all circulated pieces appear to have been lost to history.

None have been found on the BM catalogue. Whilst Sarah Sophia Banks collected contemporary ephemera, it is unlikely she rubbed shoulders with the sort of people who were issuing or using these notes and would never have lacked small change herself.

Having been on the lookout for 'one shilling' ephemera for over 30 years, and not yet seen anything like this series, if any exist, they are very rare indeed.

It would appear that we have a new series of paper or card low denomination notes or tickets that were in extensive use in mainland England at around the same time as the silver token issues of 1811-12. This is supported by two pieces of contemporary evidence; Cobbetts Political Register of 1811 and Lauderdale's report of 1813.

If any readers know of anything that fits into this series (and not just the 'one shillings'!) please get in touch via the blog.

## References and Acknowledgements

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- (15) R.H. Thompson. French Assignats current in Britain: The Parliamentary debates. *BNJ*, 1981 pp200-203.
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- (17) Cobbett's Political Register, volume XX, number 8, Saturday 24 August 1811. Available here  
<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Ty4FAAAAQAAJ&pg=RA2-PA227&lpg=RA2-PA227&dq=card+token+halfcrown+paper&source=bl&ots=07cLV1tlm7&sig=ACfU3U17Ru3MIPLgU3seWoWKtOXIPWcgXA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiG9p6FprnzAhW0lxQKHxqVBIYQ6AF6BAgHEAI>
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Many thanks to Melinda Mays for giving me her late father's archive and the photocopy that started this line of enquiry. Thanks to Ed. Moore for the images of the Wilkinson card notes and permission to use and similarly to Paul and Bente Withers for the image of Robert Wilson's Half Guinea.

A final thanks to Andrew Wager for checking through an early draft, pointing out the Robert Wilson ticket and also for finding the excellent Cobbett reference.

