

Unrecorded White Metal 18th Century Tokens – Part 2

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Introduction

Since the first note on this topic was published on the BNS blog⁽¹⁾, other specimens of false 18thC tokens have been made available for study from two different sources and are clearly from different manufacturers and materials than presented previously. This note will look at the two new groups and then compare all three together.

Myers Adams

The first pieces have a provenance directly from Myers Adams to his son and thence Simon Monks. There was initially a large group of 18thC tokens, which have long since been dispersed. Only the following two pieces remain as examples of Adam's work, and only the first displaying an 18thC token design.

Obv. Portrait with spectacles facing right.

Rev. **MORE TRADE AND FEWER TAXES**

Around a bottle

Edge. Plain

Details. Looks and feels like Al. 29.40 mm, 2.838 g.
XRF Analysis: Al 99.41%, Fe 0.58% and Zn 0.01%.

Notes. Die struck, curved lip around rev edge, obv edge partial curve, partial raised rim. The die looks like it has been created using a genuine token (Norfolk, Norwich D&H 23) and then touched up.



MA 1

Obv. Portrait with spectacles facing right. Same as above but higher relief with frosted portrait.

Rev. **S.G.M ADAMS LEEDS** around **HIS TOKEN FOR EXCHANGE ONLY**.

Edge. Plain.

Details. Looks like Ag. 32.63 mm, 16.696 g.
XRF Analysis: Ag 99.14%, Fe 0.14%, Si 0.12% and Cu 0.07%.

Notes. Proof-like obv field, die struck, raised rims both sides.



MA 2

S.G. Myers Adams was an extremely skilful die engraver based in Leeds. His portraits were cut directly into the die by hand. Within a week of the passing of Winston Churchill, he had already cut dies and was selling the medals he had struck.

His personal token (MA 1) was created by placing a genuine token between two blank discs in a collar and squeezing them in a press.⁽²⁾ Each disc could then be used as a die. This would account for the low relief of his personal token.

Baldwins Basement

The following pieces are a small selection that can be traced to Baldwin's Basement in the 1920s. They were catalogued by Michael Dickinson and subsequently dispersed. The group below was provided for study by Steve Fenton.

- Obv. **A CROCODILE TO BE SEEN ALIVE AT G BAYLY'S MUSEUM FOR** around a crocodile and scenery.
Rev. **ALL SORTS OF NATURAL HISTORY 242 PICCADILLY** around a rattle snake and tree.
Edge. Plain (collar?) with heavy scoring.



BB 1

Details. Cast white metal, 28.54 mm, 10.268 g.
Sn 99.46%, Cu 0.87%, Pb 0.31%, Fe 0.19%, Si 0.17% and nothing else detected.
Notes. Middx D&H 253.

- Obv. **HENDON VALUE ONE HALFPENNY**
Around a church **1794**.
Rev. **IN COMMEMORATION OF THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE** around an anchor and rope **1794**.
Edge. Plain (collar?) with feint scratches.



BB 2

Details. Cast white metal, 28.16 mm, 9.477 g
Sn 82.36%, Pb 10.63%, Sb 4.30%, Cu 1.48%, Si 0.80%, and trace Ti < 1%.
Notes. Middx D&H 334.

- Obv. **PIDCOCK'S EXHIBITION**
Around an elephant left.
Rev. **PIDCOCK EXETER CHANGE LONDON**
Around a chained rhinoceros left.
Edge. Plain (collar?) with feint scratches.



BB 3

Details. Cast white metal, 30.09 mm, 9.256 g.
Sn 83.76, Pb 7.29, Sb 5.72%, Cu 1.41%. Si 1.13% and traces Ti, Ag, Zn < 1%.
Notes. Middx D&H 417.

- Obv. **PIDCOCK'S EXHIBITION**
Around an elephant left.
Rev. **THIS KANGAROO'S BIRTH SEP 10 1800**
around a kangaroo with joey in pouch.
Edge. Plain (collar?) with feint scratches.



BB 4

Details. Cast white metal, 29.37 mm, 11.216 g.
Sn 86.54%, Pb 8.19%, Sb 2.80%, Si 1.21%, **Cu 0.85%** and traces Al, Zr < 1%.
Notes. Middx D&H 424.

Obv. **EXTER CHANGE STRAND LONDON** around a rhinoceros.
 Rev. **PIDCOCK EXTER CHANGE LONDON** around a chained rhinoceros.
 Edge. Plain (collar?) with feint scratches.
 Details. Cast white metal, 28.37 mm, 12.087 g.
Sn 81.6%, Pb 12.99%, Sb 2.91 %, Si 1.58%, **Cu 0.66%** and traces V << 1%
 Notes. Mule obv Middx D&H 436 and obv Middx D&H 439.



BB 5

Obv. **R. SANDERSON & C^o, N^o 17 SOUTH BRIDGE EDINBURGH** around a crowned rose and thistle.
 Rev. **R. SANDERSON & C^o, N^o 17 SOUTH BRIDGE EDINBURGH** around an eagle preying on a snake.
 Edge. Plain (collar?) with heavy scoring.
 Details. Cast white metal, 29.22 mm, 11.817 g.
Sn 91.26%, Pb 7.12%, Cu 0.83%, Si 0.42%, **Sb 0.37%** and nothing else detected.
 Notes. Mule Obv Lothian D&H 53 and Obv Lothian D&H 54.



BB 6

Obv. **BRYEN BOIROIMHE KING OF MUNSTER** around crowned head right with sceptre.
 Rev. **LIBERTY PEACE COMMERCE** around an anchor and cap of liberty.
 Edge. Plain (collar?) with feint scratches.
 Details. Cast white metal, 30.64 mm, 11.780 g.
Sn 73.16%, Pb 23.41%, Si 1.34%, **Sb 1.09%**, **Cu 0.63%** and traces Zn, P < 1%.
 Notes. Munster D&H 10.

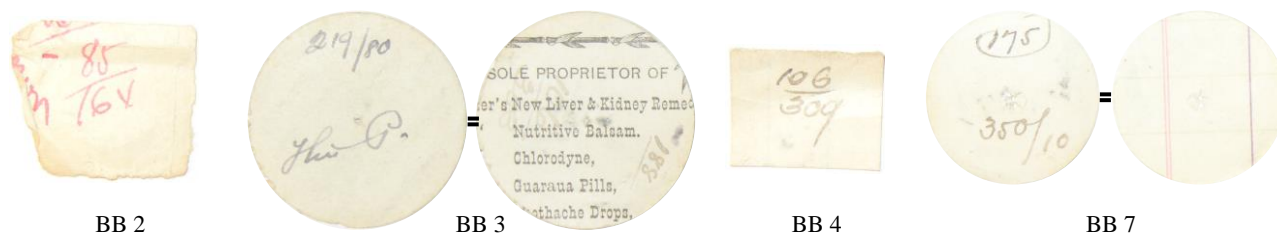


BB 7

The first general observation is that these pieces all show characteristics of being cast in moulds made from genuine tokens. There are small extra blobs of metal on the surfaces and some show evidence of subsequent cleaning up of the surface. In the same way they are all slightly different diameters and not quite circular. The marks on the edges range from fine lines to quite deep scores where the edge has been finished.

The XRF analysis shows a spread in metallic composition, and whilst all have about 1% Copper, and a complete absence of Bismuth, there are three distinct alloys. The first piece (BB 1) is almost pure Sn with no Sb detected, the next five (BB 2 -BB 6) are a Sn-Pb-Sb alloy, and the last piece (BB 7) has a very high Pb content.

Several of the Baldwin's Basement pieces came with original tickets and for completeness these are illustrated below. The writing looks very close to that found on tickets written by A.H. Baldwin (1858-1936). The numbers on tickets BB 2, 4 and 7 correspond to Atkins page/reference numbers and the numbers on BB 3 cannot be traced. The ticket is recycled paper from an advertisement card of US origin. Tickets from other pieces in the large group are cut from the same paper (thanks to Michael Dickinson).



BB 2

BB 3

BB 4

BB 7

Fig. 1. Tickets found with the 'Baldwin's Basement' white metal tokens.

The Token Edges and Outer Rims

As a final comparison this section will take a closer look at the edges and outer rims of each of the tokens described in this and the previous note: Dave Allen (DA 1-4), Myers Adams (MA 1-2) and The Baldwin's Basement group (BB 1-7). Though clearly not white metal copies of 18thC tokens, Myers Adams' method of manufacturing is quite distinctive, and he certainly had the skills to produce good copies, his two pieces are included to allow others to be identified when the do appear.

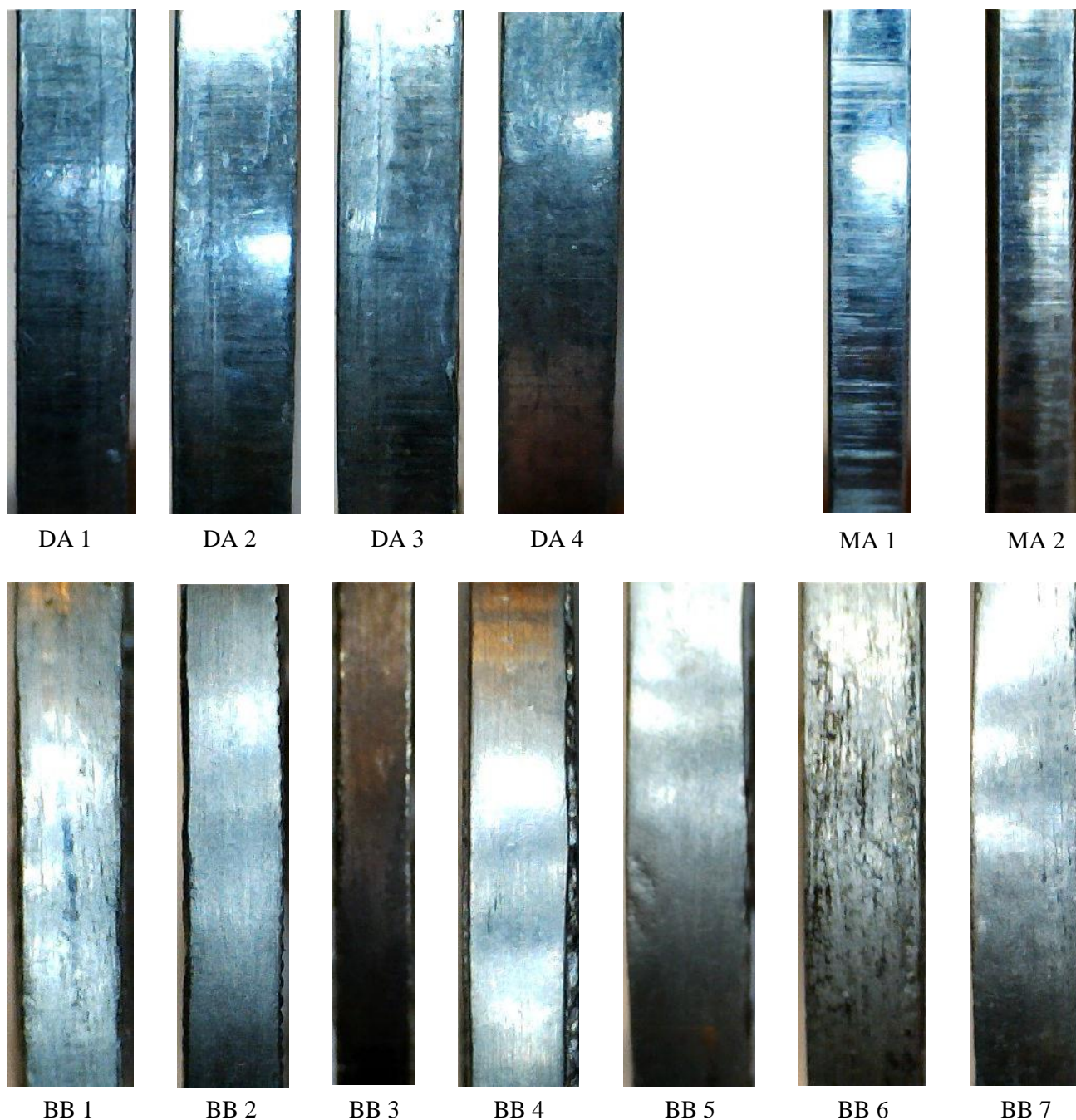


Fig 1. Comparison of edge markings for the three groups of tokens.



DA 1



DA 2



DA 3



DA 4



MA 1



MA 2



BB 1



BB 2



BB 3



BB 4



BB 5



BB 6



BB 7

Fig. 2. Comparison of the outer rims for the three groups of tokens.

Discussion and Conclusions.

The original article described four false white-metal 18thC tokens that had been found in the stock of dealer, the late Dave Allen. A further piece provided by Merfyn Williams was clearly from the same manufacturer. Following that publication, two further groups of false tokens have come to light and have been described here.

Rather than clarifying the situation, we now have three (possibly more) different series of white metal copies of 18thC tokens, as follows:

- (i) The ex-Dave Allen group. Dies made from genuine tokens, with exceptionally good edges, struck in a collar and all the same diameter. These include muled designs as well as normal tokens.
- (ii) Possible pieces manufactured by Myers Adams whose personal token includes a copy of the reverse of Norwich, Norfolk D&H 23. Though reported, none of these tokens have been seen by the author yet, but Adams was certainly sufficiently skilled to create such pieces. There is a possibility that the ex-Dave Allen group might be from Adams, the edges certainly have the correct features and the dies have been made in the same way as Adams' personal token.
- (iii) A group of pieces that can be traced to 'Baldwin's Basement' in the 1920s. These are quite primitive casts and the edges have been finished by hand with resulting fine lines and score marks around the edge. The pieces are not quite round and are of different diameters. Metallurgical analysis can divide this into three distinct groups: (iii.1) almost pure tin, (iii.2) a tin-lead-antimony alloy with lead in the range 7-13% and (iii.3) a tin-lead-antimony alloy with a very high lead content of 23.4%.

None of the pieces have any traces of Bismuth which may turn out to be a useful differentiator for genuine white metal strikings of 18thC tokens.

If anyone has any white metal 18thC tokens that can be traced to Myers Adams, I would be pleased to hear.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) G. Oddie. Unrecorded White Metal 18th Century Tokens?
<https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/214-white-metal-18thc-oddie-004-blog.pdf>
- (2) Simon Monks. The Last Token Issuer. Talk presented at the 2015 Token Congress held in Newbury, 2nd – 4th October.
- (3) R. J. Eaglen, P.D. Mitchell and H.E. Pagan. Coin tickets in the British hammered series', BNJ 71, pp 136-57, see plate 29, 2001.

Thanks to Michael Dickinson for explaining the recent history of the 'Baldwin's Basement' pieces and their tickets and to Simon Monks and Steve Fenton for loaning their tokens.

