

F.R. Reynolds of Yarmouth: Silver Token and Promissory Note Issuer, 1811

Gary Oddie

The issuer of this token has been given as Frederick Riddell Reynolds “a prosperous Yarmouth trader and attorney who, apart from issuing the town's other shilling token, also issued promissory notes for five shillings.”^(1,2) However, this name is in error and the issuer was actually Francis Riddell Reynolds.^(3,4,5)

The Reynolds family has been traced back to the seventeenth century, with William Reynolds a landowner in Wenhamston in Suffolk (d. 1678), whose son, also a William, lived at Wisset (d.1716). One of his sons, Thomas Reynolds (d.1755) had several sons, the youngest of which was John Reynolds. John Reynolds married Ann, daughter of James Pain of King's Lynn. John Reynolds trained as a solicitor under Thomas Harmer and Thomas Miller of Great Yarmouth and set up his own practice there in 1760.⁽⁴⁾ John Reynolds acted for The Rt. Hon. Charles Townsend, MP for the Borough for 30 years, and himself was Mayor in 1781 and 1784 and deputy Mayor in 1783. Reynolds operated in a partnership; Reynolds & Palmer (1765- 1787).⁽⁵⁾

John Reynolds had seven children, his second son Francis Riddell Reynolds was born in 1772, married Ann Preston on 25 July 1793 and lived his whole life in Great Yarmouth. F.R. Reynolds studied law in his father's office, was admitted as an attorney in 1791, and succeeded to his father's practice in 1799. A son Francis Riddell was born in 1798, but died in 1820.

In 1802 he acquired a Yarmouth brewery, and afterwards built a new one in a different location. He was elected Mayor of Yarmouth in 1804 and again in 1823. He also became Deputy-Lieutenant Governor of Norfolk, and was Vice President of the Yarmouth Hospital. He was trustee to the hospital 1794-1846. F.R. Reynolds died in 1846. The name continued in the area with many later appearances of a W.C. Reynolds (son or grandson) including being elected MP as a tory 1867.⁽⁵⁾

The middle name Riddell derives from a very wealthy landowning family from Suffolk whose ancestry can be traced back to the Norman conquest. I haven't been able to find a genealogical connection between the Reynolds and Riddell families, but there would almost certainly be a professional connection between F.R. Reynolds' father and the Riddell family businesses which at this time also extended into land ownership and mining activities in the north of England and Scotland.⁽⁴⁾

F.R. Reynolds issued two main types of tokens^(1,6), and there is an unexpected and contemporary reference to the issue in 1811. The London Chronicle of Friday November 22nd, 1811 (p.504 col.3.), The Evening Sun (London)^(1,2) and The Times newspaper⁽²⁾ of the same day, all carried a notice of the theft of some of Reynolds' tokens whilst in transit from London.

The Yarmouth coach was robbed a few nights since, of silver tokens, to the amount of £19 17s. of one shilling each, out of a box containing the same description of tokens to the amount of £100. The coach goes from the White Horse, Fetter-Lane, and changes coaches at Ipswich where the coach becomes a Mail; the box was there discovered to have been broken and shattered, and when it reached the gentleman at Yarmouth, to whom it was directed, tokens to the above amount were discovered to be missing. A guard has been in custody for several days, on suspicion of being concerned in the robbery. Two or three witnesses were examined, but they not being able to prove anything against him, he was discharged.

The story was repeated over the next few days in the Suffolk Chronicle Saturday 23 November 1811 (p.4 col. 3), The News (London) Sunday 24 November 1811 (p.8 col.1) and was abridged to just the first part in the Bury and Norwich Post on Wednesday 27 November 1811 (p.4 col.2).

This adds two incidental facts to Reynolds' silver token issues. Firstly they were probably manufactured in London and secondly, this batch of tokens comprised 2,000 pieces, which might be a typical mintage figure or order size. Davis gives the engraver as Halliday, though based in Birmingham, engraver to the London manufacturer who went by the name Henry Morgan.⁽⁷⁾ This is consistent with Wager's suggestion that the Morgan operation sourced dies from elsewhere and subcontracted the token manufacture to a local London button maker.⁽⁸⁾ However the tokens might have been struck in Birmingham and sent to Morgan for distribution.

The first token (D.16) has the arms of Yarmouth on the obverse and the shield on the reverse shows the arms of the Duke of Norfolk, in front of his crossed batons or staves as Earl Marshal. Although by this period the Duke of Norfolk possessed little if any land in Norfolk, Reynolds thought it appropriate to show the arms of a peer whose title associated him with the county. The seat of the Duke of Norfolk is Arundel Castle in Sussex. The shield is correctly described as “Gules on a Bend between six Cross-crosslets fitchy Argent an Escutcheon Or charged with a Demi-lion rampant pierced through the mouth by an arrow within a Double Tressure flory counterflory of the first.”⁽⁹⁾



The arms used by the Reynolds family are: Argent, a chevron, Lozengy gules and azure; on a chief of the third a cross formée fitchée between two mullets or. The crest, a hand holding a roll, can be found as part of the design of Reynolds' other tokens and promissory note.

The Silver Tokens of 1811

The following are all of the known tokens naming F.R. Reynolds, D16 and D17 are the normal issues and relatively common. D17bis and D17ter are correctly catalogued here for the first time and at present, both are believed to be the only surviving examples of pieces that show heraldic shading in the Yarmouth arms.

Obv. **PAYABLE BY F.R. REYNOLDS**
YARMOUTH around a shield containing the Arms of Yarmouth. Shield with no shading.

Rev. **NORFOLK TOKEN FOR XII PENCE** inscribed on a garter around a shield containing the Duke of Norfolk's arms and date **1811**.

Details. [Norfolk D.16](#). Ar, oblique milled edge, 24.9mm, 4.165g. Shown $\times 1.5$. (Noonans 30 June 2021 Lot 402 part)



Obv. **PAYABLE BY F.R. REYNOLDS**
YARMOUTH around a shield containing the Arms of Yarmouth. Shield with no shading.

Rev. **NORFOLK TOKEN FOR XII PENCE** inscribed on a garter around a castle with hand and baton above, **1811** below.

Details. [Norfolk D.17](#). Ar, oblique milled edge, 24.7mm, 3.423 g. Shown $\times 1.5$. (Noonans 30 June 2021 Lot 402 part)



Obv. **PAYABLE BY F.R. REYNOLDS**
YARMOUTH around a shield containing the Arms of Yarmouth. Shield with shading.

Rev. **NORFOLK TOKEN FOR XII PENCE** inscribed on a garter around a castle with hand and baton above, **1811** below.

Details. [Norfolk D.17 Bis](#). Ar, oblique milled edge, 24.9mm, 3.970g. Shown $\times 1.5$. British Museum T.6075, ex Sarah Sophia Banks, donated by Lady Dorothea Banks in 1818. The piece is very darkly toned as can be seen on the BM website image - www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_T-6075. A photo using a flash, cuts through the toning to reveal the underlying brilliance.

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Obv. **PAYABLE BY F.R. REYNOLDS**
YARMOUTH around a shield containing the
 Arms of Yarmouth. Shield with shading.
 Rev. **NORFOLK TOKEN FOR XII PENCE.**
 inscribed on a garter around a castle with hand
 and baton above, **1811** below.

Details. **Norfolk D.17 Ter.** Brass, oblique milled edge,
 24.8mm, 5.354 g. Shown $\times 1.5$. Slightly false
 colour as the camera flash made the areas of dark
 toning look silvered, but there is no trace of silver on the surface. The irregular toning, poorly struck
 outer beads and areas where the edge graining has interfered with the edge teeth confirms the following
 provenance: Ex P. Deane, Ex W.J. Noble, Noble Numismatics (Australia) Sale 58B, 7-8 July 1998, Lot
 1731. Unaware of the BM piece, the obv. of this piece is described and illustrated in Mays' addendum
 as D. 17 Bis without provenance.⁽²⁾ I prefer a sequence where the off-metal strikes are listed after the
 tokens struck in the correct metal.



The two pieces above were made using dies that share many common punches, e.g. the whole of the shaded
 shield on the obv. and most of the castle design on the rev. They do appear to be very slightly different dies
 rather than die states (recut, worn or infilled). On the obv. the beading around the buckle design is slightly
 different and on the reverse the baton and the groundline for the hand are different.

The Promissory Note of 1811

Davis and then Mays mention that F.R. Reynolds also issued a five shillings promissory note, but without giving
 a source. The note is not listed in Outing's standard catalogue of provincial banknotes.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, the note
 can be found on the BM website, but not illustrated. The BM note is illustrated below. It is mounted on card
 and had to be photographed through the mylar sleeve. The card has been digitally removed.



Fig. 1. Great Yarmouth Five Shillings Promissory Note of 1811, signed by F.R. Reynolds.
 British Museum, catalogue CIB-5963. On loan from the Chartered Institute of Bankers.
 137×68 mm, shown approximately 125%.

The note is signed by F.R. Reynolds and T. Miller and the wreath to the left contains a shield bearing the
 Reynolds' family arms (on the left) with their crest above and the motto below *FAVENTE DEO* (With God
 Favours). The owner of the arms on the right-hand side of the shield has not yet been found. The T. Miller is
 very unlikely to be the Yarmouth solicitor, Thomas Miller, under whom F.R. Reynolds' father trained⁽⁴⁾, but
 may be a descendant or more likely another businessman working in Yarmouth in 1811.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) W.J. Davis. *The Nineteenth Century Token Coinage*. 1904, reprinted 1969 and 1979.
- (2) J. O'Donald Mays. *Tokens of Those Trying Times*. New Forest Leaves, 1991. p.31.
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- (5) F.D. Palmer. *Yarmouth Notes 1830-1872. Collated from the files of the Norwich Mercury*. 1889, 2012 reprint. <https://www.noor-book.com/en/ebook-Yarmouth-Notes-18301872-Collated-from-the-File-of-the-Norwich-Mercury-pdf>
- (6) R. Dalton. *The Silver Token-Coinage Mainly Issued Between 1811-1812*. 1922, Seaby Reprint 1968.
- (7) R.N.P. Hawkins. *A Dictionary of Makers of British Metallic Tickets, checks, medalets, Tallies and Counters. 1788-1910*. Baldwin, 1989.
- (8) A. Wager. *The Mystery of Henry Morgan. A Numismatic Detective Story*. Barkhams's Press, 2007. Chapter 9, p. 107.
- (9) Thanks to Clive Cheesman, Richmond Herald at the College of Arms for identifying the Duke of Norfolk's arms on the silver token.
- (10) R. Outing. *The Standard Catalogue of the Provincial Banknotes of England & Wales*. Token Publishing, 2010.

Thanks to John Newman for spotting the brass Reynolds token which had lost all of its provenance, and to Michael Dickinson for making the connection with the piece in the Noble sale. Michael Dickinson is also thanked for correcting an earlier version of this note and making useful additions regarding "Henry Morgan's" operation.

Thanks to Tom Hockenhull for arranging my visit to the British Museum and to Ash, Amanda and Amelia (The A-Team?) for hosting my visit and bringing items out from the vaults at short notice.



Postscript – Hugh Pagan – 8 November 2022

It is worth adding to Gary Oddie's useful note that Francis Riddell Reynolds was the great-grandfather of Henry Muskett Reynolds (1853-1948), a founder member of the British Numismatic Society, whose impressive and carefully selected collections of Anglo-Saxon and Norman coins were sold at Sothebys in two sales in 1914 and 1919. H.M.Reynolds also donated specialist collections of coins of the Norwich mint and of seventeenth-century Norfolk tokens to Norwich Castle Museum. His father, William Collett Reynolds, a solicitor in Great Yarmouth, will have been W.C.Reynolds to whom Gary refers in his remarks