

The hole suggests either (i) use as a badge or (ii) nailing into door lintels as a talisman for warding off witches. If the hole had been central, I would have favoured the latter; as it is, with the hole near an edge, it could be either. If a badge, that would have been its only use, and it would probably have been in connection with access to something, e.g. permission to go on, or be in, part of a big estate. It is well worth asking, when confronted with this type of piece, i.e. a potential pass, whether there are any big houses near the findspot. If a talisman fixed to a cottage door, then that would probably be a secondary use of a piece rendered obsolete in connection with some other earlier {probably commercial} local purpose.

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Regular Dutch correspondent Alex Kussendrager has sent in two interesting pieces {Figs.5,6}. The first, found near Gouda {Netherlands}, has already appeared in one detectorist magazine inviting comment, to which a reader replied that he thought that it might be a British communion token of the late 17th or early 18th cent. Having his doubts on this, Alex passed it to me for comment.

The piece may have a shape which suggests CT but there the likeness ends. Pure lead CTs are usually early and quite small, and such CTs as do reach this size are usually 19th cent and/or made of other metals. The design is highly unusual and not one which one would expect to find on a CT; indeed, there is a hint of modernism about it, which feels quite strange. The depiction is of a sitting man, not a kneeling one, and for a piece of simple abstraction is surprisingly effective. The crudity of the casting may make it feel early but the artwork is so well done, and so styled, as to suggest a much more recent date. Maybe it is a 20th cent bus/train/tram pass.

Communion tokens do occasionally have retrospective lettering but it is comparatively rare; the ministers were educated people and would usually take care of the quality of anything which went out in their names. Assuming the piece to be genuine, one has to ask, having dismissed the CT idea, what it might be used for. A ticket for a ride on an early vehicle, maybe? a sitting figure would be appropriate for that. RT would be the proprietor of the company which operated it, and most likely the sole operator.



Alex's second piece {Fig.6} is of unknown provenance, 35mm across and 21.6gm in weight. A date, 1790-something and not readily visible, flanks the heart, on which a "V" is superimposed. The hole at top centre says a badge or pass, the crown that it is an official badge or pass. The fact that the issuer needed to date it means that it has an annual period of validity, so it may be a licence to practise some activity for the year in question; for example, a porter's badge. Allied to that idea, it could be a membership badge, e.g. for the then equivalent of a trade union; alternatively, it could be a badge to indicate that the person wearing it was in receipt of charity. In the latter case V would indicate the initial letter of the category concerned, whatever type it was; in Britain, V for "Vagrant", indicating a wandering beggar, would be a viable option. As the country of origin is unknown here, one has to start thinking of what V might stand for in different languages. V = Victory, or a language variant, has also been suggested. If you have any ideas regarding either of these pieces, please let us know.

Tony Gilbert writes, concerning the token that last month I tongue-in-cheek suggested might be a urine token {Fig.7}, that maybe the "U" represents a horse harness? Or maybe a horseshoe; both are certainly very feasible. A blacksmith's or leatherworker's token, if that conjecture is correct. Fig.8 is worth comparing, even if its likeness and use may be only coincidental. I slightly favour it being O/zero rather than U, possibly O for oil, but it has an I/one on the other side.

