RICHARD THOMAS SAMUEL  
(1831-1906)  

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The acquisition of knowledge is rarely easy and often entails the efforts of many individuals. This article outlines some of the stages by which we have reached our present appreciation of the token coinage issued in the reign of George III.

The first list was apparently published by an individual called Hammond in 1794. Few or no copies have survived.

Next followed The Coin Collectors’ Companion being a description of the Modern Political and other Copper Coins, by T. Spence, 1795. This is extremely rare. Thomas Spence was a coin dealer, political reformer, and pamphleteer who lived at the quaintly styled ‘Hive of Liberty’, no. 8 Little Turnstile, Holborn, London. He was arrested four times for his political views and imprisoned twice on charges of high treason.

On 22 October 1795 M. Denton, an engraver and printer of Hospital Gate, West Smithfield, London, published the first volume of The Virtuoso’s Companion and Coin Collectors Guide for T. Prattent, a London coin dealer. It contained thirty plates, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 4 inches, each plate showing engravings of the obverse and reverse of four coins, but there was no attempt at an orderly arrangement. The second volume of a further thirty plates followed on 4 February 1796; the third volume on 19 May 1796; the fourth volume on 1 September 1796; the fifth volume on 1 December 1796, but from a different address—St. Johns Street, Smithfield; and the sixth volume on 11 February 1797, also from St. Johns Street. Volume seven, published on 22 April 1797, has each plate inscribed ‘Published by T. Prattent 46 Cloth Fair London’. This is the first mention of the publisher by name. Volume eight bears the same inscription but only gives the publication date as 1797. The whole work consisted of 240 plates, no text, and three indexes amounting to a further 28 pages.

In 1796 Samuel Birchall of Leeds issued A Descriptive list of the Provincial Copper Coins or Tokens issued between the years 1786 and 1796 arranged Alphabetically.

The same year Charles Pye, an engraver and die-sinker of Birmingham, published his Provincial Copper Coins or Tokens issued between the years 1787 and 1796. The book consisted of thirty-six plates 10 inches by 6 inches of full engravings, each plate displaying the obverse and reverse of five coins. In 1801 Pye issued a larger second edition of fifty-five plates, 11 inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, containing varying numbers of coin illustrations and only engraved in outline, but with the addition of brief notes concerning the die-sinker, manufacturer, proprietor, and the amounts struck, together with other interesting facts gathered by Pye and George Barker, a friend and fellow collector, also of Birmingham.

In 1798 James Condor, a draper of Ipswich, published An Arrangement of Provincial Coins, Tokens, and Medalets issued in Great Britain, Ireland and the Colonies, a work of 330 pages, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with three plates. There was an explanatory preface are given, instead of the usual printers’ terms: Demy 8vo, 4vo, &c.
of 14 pages written by James Wright Jnr., a Dundee merchant who was an ardent collector of tokens and was himself the designer of several of the Scottish pieces. He died shortly before the publication of the work. Wright also contributed several articles to the papers of the times including the Gentleman's Magazine under the nom de plume of Civis. Conder published a larger quarto edition* in two volumes, the first appearing in 1798 and the second in 1799. These contain a little extra material, but are rare. Conder initiated the arrangement of tokens by counties which is still used, and his book remained the standard work for more than ninety years.

In 1834 Thomas Sharp, a Coventry antiquarian and numismatist, issued a catalogue of the pieces in the magnificent collection of Sir George Chetwynd, and drew upon the baronet's personal reminiscences of his contacts with James Conder, Charles Pye, Thomas and Peter Wyon, Matthew Young, William Till, and other eminent collectors and dealers. The catalogue ran to 280 pages, 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches by 9\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches, without illustrations except for a tailpiece, an engraving of Grendon Hall, Warwickshire, the seat of Sir George. Sharp's catalogue was arranged in nine parts. Parts I, III, V (207 pages) were devoted to the tokens of the eighteenth century of the United Kingdom: Parts II, IV, VI (27 pages) to those issued between 1811 and 1822. This is the first record of this series and fortunately Sharp noted the names of most of the die-sinkers though not the manufacturers. Part VII recorded the Colonial Tokens and Coins in the collection (19 pages): Part VIII contained Theatre, Shop, Society and Truck tickets, and other miscellaneous metallic disks: Part IX was devoted to political pieces and medalets of famous buildings. Only sixty copies were privately printed and the work is now very scarce.

Between 1868 and 1884 D. T. Batty, a Manchester dealer in coins, medals, old china, stamps, pictures, and antique curiosities, issued a catalogue of 704 pages, 8\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches by 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches, in twenty-nine parts, recording all the copper tokens issued in the United Kingdom. Each of the first four parts contained a single engraved plate displaying twelve illustrations, but this embellishment was thereafter abandoned, probably to reduce expense. Between 1886 and 1896 this indefatigable man followed up this massive work with a descriptive catalogue of the regal copper, brass, and pewter coins of the United Kingdom, from 1601 to 1859 (472 pages), and the Colonial Copper Currency (121 pages); the whole work amounting to 1301 pages and taking over thirty years to compile. He was preparing an appendix to the work when he died, and it was completed for him by Mr. F. G. Lawrence. This was a further 152 pages.

Batty's massive work, based on his personal collection of about 35,000 coins, is a monument to his perseverance and contains information not to be found elsewhere, but the arrangement of the material is peculiar and it is difficult to find a particular piece. Batty was obsessed with the importance of minutiae: to quote from his own writings, which incidentally shows his difficult style:

The Author has taken great delight in finding out, as nearly as possible, the number of Dies used. This information is now given in each Annual Mint Report. He thinks that if more attention was paid by Collectors to this matter, the value of their Collections would greatly increase, and in another generation, or less, it will be most difficult to get specimens which now clog the market, simply for want of being examined and the difference noted, for he considers it quite plain that no two coins can be alike when struck from dissimilar Dies. The same coins must be struck from the same Dies, or, although they may be in appearance 'AS', yet they are only 'SIMILAR TO' each other.

He also has adopted an infallible method of ascertaining a diversity of impression by means of the Flaws, to obviate details, for it is quite certain that Flaws do not heal up and break out in another
part of the same Die. He also finds that there are fewer duplicates from flawed coins than from perfect ones; implying that new Dies were used, in most cases, as soon as the Flaws in the old ones were discovered.

Batty started a cult among collectors and influenced succeeding authors, each of whom strove to include more and more variants in their works, giving forgeries and counterfeits equal status with genuine coins, and even, on ground of rarity, promoting mules and workmen's freaks above true pieces. This increased the bulk and expense of standard works enormously, and has discouraged many would-be collectors of this fascinating series.

In 1892 James Atkins published The Tradesmen's Tokens of the xviii Century which replaced Conder's book as the ultimate authority. It contained 415 pages, 8½ inches by 5½ inches, with no illustrations, but with a six-page introduction, a list of 491 imitation regal coins, and an alphabetical list of all the edge readings found on tokens.

In 1904 W. J. Davis, an Inspector of Factories, issued a limited edition of 258 copies of The Nineteenth Century Token Coinage of Great Britain Ireland The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man (324 pages, 11½ inches by 8½ inches, with fourteen plates each containing the obverse and reverse of about twenty coins. There were a further nineteen plates depicting individuals, places, and events of numismatic interest, and fourteen woodcuts). Although long out of print and difficult to obtain, this book remains the only complete work on the series.

Between 1910 and 1917 a monumental publication appeared in fourteen sections: The Provincial Token-Coinage of the 18th Century (illustrated) by R. Dalton and S. H. Hamer (567 pages, 9½ inches by 7½ inches, with approximately fifteen photographs on every page). Each section contained a short introduction with brief notes. These are somewhat unsatisfactory, but have been supplemented by A. W. Waters's Notes on Eighteenth Century Tokens, Seaby, 1954.

Samuel Henry Hamer was an engineer and lathe-maker and lived in Halifax, Yorkshire. He died in 1930 at the age of seventy.

Richard Dalton was a director of the Imperial Tobacco Company and lived in Bristol. He died in 1922 aged sixty-eight. In addition to his collaboration in Provincial Token-Coinage of the Eighteenth Century he also wrote The Silver Token-Coinage mainly issued between 1811 and 1812 which was published after his death by A. W. Waters at Leamington in 1922.

In 1912 G. C. Kent issued the first price catalogue: British Metallic Coins and Tradesmen's Tokens with their Value (349 pages, 8½ inches by 5½ inches). There were six sections, each beginning with a brief historical explanation and notes. Section 1 related to the Regal Coinage of England from 1601 to 1912; section 2 to the Eighteenth-Century Tokens: section 3 to the Nineteenth-Century Tokens: section 4 to the Seventeenth-Century Tokens: section 5 to Patterns, Proofs, &c.: section 6 to non-local Tokens. This remained the only guide to the value of individual coins apart from dealers' lists and sale catalogues until the publication of British Copper Coins and their Values. Part II by H. A. Seaby, 1949, reprinted in 1961.

Other valuable contributions to the knowledge of tokens have been made by the authors listed below, but their works are either local: e.g. Sykes's Hull Coins and Tokens 1892, or of restricted scope: e.g. Longman's Tokens of the Eighteenth Century connected with Booksellers and Bookmakers, 1916.
One name is missing from the list of authors of outstanding general works. Between 1880 and 1889 a very long series of articles on tokens appeared anonymously in the *Bazaar Exchange and Mart* at irregular intervals in the Wednesday numbers. They aroused considerable interest among numismatists, many of whom wrote to the paper giving additional information, or criticism—the latter sometimes acrimonious. The complete series amounts to at least 700 pages of normal print and represents a major work which the author intended publishing in book form, but he died before the project was completed and this great contribution is now virtually unknown to the majority of collectors.

Through a series of extraordinary coincidences the present writer was able to discover the identity of the author of the *Bazaar* articles and obtained a short biography from a grandson, Mr. John Samuel-Gibbon, who also loaned the medals illustrated.

Richard Thomas Samuel, the author of the anonymous articles published in the *Bazaar Exchange and Mart* between 1880 and 1889, was born on 3 October 1831, and was baptized at Marylebone New Church on 21 December of that year. He came of a Glamorganshire family, being the only son of Richard Lewis Samuel who married Fanny Pardoe, daughter of Thomas Pardoe, the ceramic artist and decorator of much of the porcelain produced at Nantgarw.

Richard Samuel was educated at Romford and articled to a firm of solicitors in London, but before completing his training he moved to Swansea, where he became for some years a ship-broker. In 1858 he married Elizabeth Crush Mee, third daughter of Edward Collet Mee of Fingrith Hall, Essex. While in Swansea Samuel contributed to the *Cambrian* newspaper a series of articles on the copper tokens of the Principality, and this suggests that he became a collector about 1860.

Towards the end of 1867 he returned to London where he acted as the representative of a number of South Wales coal companies and began some years later the series of articles in the *Bazaar Exchange and Mart* entitled *Provincial Copper Coins or Tokens of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*.

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1 Richard Lewis Samuel was the only son of the Reverend Richard Samuel, R.N. (1774–1839), who was chaplain of the *Defence*, ship-of-war, and served under Nelson at the battles of the Nile and Copenhagen. (See *The Pottery and Porcelain of Swansea and Nantgarw* by E. Morton Nance, Batsford, 1942, p. 481.)

2 Op. cit., pp. 43 ff. 418 ff. and Appendix VII.

3 See Walford’s *County Families of the United Kingdom* (Chatto & Windus, 1902), p. 911.
In 1893, on the death of a kinsman John Samuel-Gibbon,1 Samuel succeeded to estates at Bonvilston, Newton, and Trecastle, in the Vale of Glamorgan. At this time Samuel's interests were mainly of an antiquarian nature and during his later years he began to compile the Bazaar articles in book form, but this was unfinished when he died in 1906. A few copies of the first 208 pages of the work were printed and a bound copy was presented to the British Museum Library in 1938. Most, if not all, of Samuel's collection of coins, medals, and tokens were presented to the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff in 1932.

Samuel broke new ground in token collecting. He cared little whether a waistcoat had three or four buttons, or if the forehead of a bust lined up with the N or Y of penny, but he was intensely interested in the individual portrayed, who he was and why his features adorned a coin; an attitude at variance with the passionate devotion to microscopic detail which mesmerized his contemporaries.

There are three private medals of Richard Thomas Samuel. All have his bust on the obverse, Fig. 1, but the first reverse, Fig. 2, dated 1893, shows Bonvilston Church. There is only one known copy of this, in lead, and it may be an abandoned pattern. The second reverse, Fig. 3, displays the armorial bearings granted to the John Samuel-Gibbon to whose estates Samuel succeeded. These are a variant of those of the Gibbons of Trecastle. The blazon reads: 'Party per pale a chevron between three fleurs-de-lys, the whole within a border engrailed, all countercharged argent and sable. Crest: a boar's head couped azure, transfixed by a spear erect, azure, suspended therefrom a buglehorn sable by a ribbon azure.' The motto in Welsh reads: 'Trwy. Rhinwedd A. Gonestrwydd' which may be translated as 'Through Virtue and Honesty'. Above the exergue line are the initials R. J. R. in very small letters, and below the line 1898. The third reverse, Fig. 4, has a different design of Bonvilston church and is dated 1906.

The medals were struck by Wright & Son of Edgware, London. The firm's records have been destroyed but Mr. Samuel-Gibbon believes that they were struck after

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1 High Sheriff of Glamorgan 1856; Master, Hound in Wales, by E. W. Price (Daniel Owen & Co. Glamorganshire Foxhounds, 1877–86. See Hound and 1890), pp. 91 ff., 177 ff. et passim.
his grandfather’s death by the family. The date 1893 may refer to the year Samuel inherited the estates, and 1906 to the year of his death. The significance of 1898 is unknown.

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