THE TOKEN COINAGE OF WILLIAM FULLARTON

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Introduction

In my past three addresses I have tried to illustrate the development of the eighteenth-century trade token through the activities of some of the Birmingham die-sinkers and token manufacturers of the 1790s. I hope in my final talk to be able to bring these strands together in a general survey of the eighteenth-century token. Tonight, though, I would like to say something about an attempt to promote a particular token coinage in 1799, which foreshadowed the rash of silver tokens a decade or so later and, in its prematurity, caused ripples of concern in government circles themselves: an abortive scheme the dies for which, nevertheless, achieved an afterlife of restrikes and concoctions that have confounded numismatists for the past century and more, exemplifying the fact that apparently genuine tokens struck from legitimate dies may not be what they seem.

The projector of the coinage – or as Charles Pye would have styled him – its ‘proprietor’ – was Colonel William Fullarton (1754–1808), a member of a substantial Ayrshire family long established along the Irvine coast of the Firth of Clyde, an erstwhile junior diplomat who had subsequently raised a regiment and translated himself into an army officer, serving with great distinction in India.

Fullarton was several times an MP and, after our time, a contentious First Commissioner of Trinidad where the notoriety of his perceived vexatious persecution of his fellow commissioner, Thomas Picton,1 was to overshadow by far the fame of his military campaigns in India. This is not the place to dwell on Fullarton’s life story, which is, in any event, sufficiently well, if succinctly, chronicled in the Dictionary of National Biography and the History of Parliament.2 What it is important to know about this quixotic character, however, is that, although, at the outset of his career, Fullarton had been a very wealthy man his activities on the sub-continent had considerably drained his resources. Already lampooned in his early days in London as a ‘hungry Scotchman’ on the make, most of the later ventures of this ‘black-headed Scot’, although certainly tinctured with altruism, were directed at restoring his finances. On his home ground, Fullarton, an F.R.S. (1779), was seen as an improving landlord with a scientific interest in the conversion of grasslands into arable. And, from about the year 1793, he was, as he himself was at pains to point out, ‘engaged in every possible exertion to establish a harbour at the Troon … and a canal from thence to Kilmarnock’ designed and constructed by the engineer John Rennie.3 Such a development – with a companion undertaking from Irvine to Paisley – would have given ‘every advantage to the circulation of manufacture and produce in the county’: involving Fullarton lands both at Troon and along the route of the canal, it would, if successful, have proved profitable, too, as would his equally futile invention of making bar iron and

Note: This paper, to which I have added footnotes and an appendix of documents, formed the second part of my 2002 Presidential Address.

Abbreviations:


BHM – Laurence Brown, British Historical Medals 1760–1960, Volume I (London, 1980);

MBP – The Matthew Boulton Papers deposited in the Birmingham Central Library;


1 Namier and Brooke as in n. 2, p. 843; the Glasgow Advertiser carried an announcement on 20 September 1793 that an application was to be made to Parliament for the development of the canal and harbour: Col. Fullarton of Fullarton, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr, with Observations on the Means of its Improvement (Edinburgh, 1793), p. 88. A crucial consideration behind the canal scheme was to bring coal down from the Kilmarnock collieries. A partner in the scheme: Lord Titchfield, heir to the estate of Portland, said of Rennie (and Fullarton), ‘I am inclined to think of him and the Colonel “like master like man”. He has a mind to have as many jobs [sic] as he can cut out for himself’. University of Nottingham Library, Portland (London) Collection, PI E18/11/1/28.
steel if that had been pursued. One should add that as an MP Fullarton was a Whig – initially a follower of North and serving latterly in the Portland interest – and that, from the mid-1780s, through his political associations, he developed a close connection with the Prince of Wales.

Fullarton’s 1799 pattern token coinage – and I use this terminology deliberately because the tokens that he had in mind were intended to circulate as currency – was, except for a copper halfpenny, to be of silver in several denominations. It never became a substantive issue primarily because of concerns that a privately sponsored silver coinage would be a breach of the royal prerogative, concerns like those that had confronted Matthew Boulton over a scheme to produce silver shillings for Walter Taylor, the Portsmouth shipwright and brewer, in 1789 and had brought John Wilkinson’s plunge into silver token production to an abrupt end the previous year.⁴

The 1799 patterns were not Fullarton’s first venture into token production. There had been two earlier projects each connected with his promotion of the Troon Canal and, what is particularly important both for the immediate fate of the 1799 tokens and the subsequent history of their dies is that all three were undertaken through the agency of the London jeweller and coin dealer Matthew Young, the original dies being cut by John Milton, the engraver who had two years earlier been dismissed from his post at the Royal Mint for supplying dies for the counterfeiting of foreign gold.⁵

The ‘William Wallace’ Halfpenny – 1797

Fig. 1. Fullarton’s ‘William Wallace’ Halfpenny [D&H: Ayrshire 3]. (Proof in Collar)

The first of Fullarton’s tokens, the ‘Wallace’ halfpenny of 1797, bears on its obverse a romanticised bust of William Wallace – traditionally, the Scottish hero had local antecedents – with the surrounding legend GULIELMUS VALLAS. The reverse has a seated female figure emblematic of Scotland with the legend SCOTIA REDIVIVA above it and, in the exergue, the date 1797 divided by the monogram T C. It is signed to the left above the exergue line with the letter M. It is 28 mm in diameter, the usual size for a provincial halfpenny. Charles Pye, in the 1801 quarto edition of his catalogue, was the first published authority to identify the token’s issuer as Fullarton, an attribution confirmed in her manuscript catalogue by Miss Banks ⁶ who acquired her specimen – a copper version struck without collar – on 11 November 1797. James Wright, over larding his cake as usual, ranked the piece, with among others, Milton’s coins for Barbadoes and his Ipswich penny, ‘high among the best productions of modern art’.⁷ Other critics would have been more circumspect about Milton’s abilities. Sir Joseph Banks, one of his staunchest allies, regarded Milton as a competent engraver but one who was not in the same design league as a Flaxman. Nevertheless, as Tom Stainton said in his excellent paper on Milton, his work did not lack vigour and interest.⁸

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⁴ MBP 150 (Letter Book Q, 1789–1792), 24 December 1789. According to Charles Pye the Wilkinson ‘Fine Silver’ tokens (D&H: Warwickshire 337) – with ‘ship’ type reverse – initially circulated at a value of 3/6d. Boulton in his letter to Taylor intimates that by the end of 1789 Wilkinson was again thinking of issuing a silver coinage although this came to nothing.


⁶ [Sarah Sophia Banks], Ms. Catalogue of Coin Collection, VI – Tokens. ‘Scotland’, p. 155. Miss Banks may, of course, simply been copying Pye; it is equally likely, though, that her information came direct from Young or Milton.

⁷ ‘Preface’ to James Conder, An Arrangement of Provincial Coins, Tokens, and Medalets, ... (Ipswich, 1798), n. (g).

⁸ Stainton, as in n. 5, p. 137.
Pye, whose note was apparently based on information supplied by Milton himself, tells us that 576 pieces were minted, of which 500 were struck without a collar and the remainder (of which four were in silver) in a collar.\textsuperscript{9} Stainton suggested that this comparatively limited number of tokens was designed as a promotional exercise in connection with the Troon Canal Company bill that Fullarton, as a Member for Ayrshire, was attempting to steer through the Commons in the summer of that year.\textsuperscript{10} Attractive as this theory may be there is no evidence to support it. And, since the majority of pieces are struck without a collar and have every appearance of being utilitarian in intent, it seems more likely that the bill’s failure to pass the Lords in July 1797 put the canal scheme on hold thus obviating any need for an immediate and extensive issue of redemptive promissory tokens to meet the economic requirements of any workforce involved in the project.

Nevertheless, whatever the setbacks, Fullarton continued to press ahead with his canal scheme and, within eighteen months with greater political success in prospect, he had embarked on the production of a second token.

The ‘Adam Smith’ Shilling – 1798

Fullarton’s new token has, for its obverse, a neo-classical head ‘in the antique manner’ and, for its reverse, a female figure in classical pose apparently grieving over a military defeat. There are no inscriptions other than the signature J. MILTON F on the reverse and it appears, therefore, to be an unfinished essay. According to Pye – who is, once more, the first published authority to associate the token with Fullarton – only a ‘few proofs’ were made and since he does not specify any metal or denomination he was presumably aware only of copper pieces and assumed that they were intended to pass as halfpennies.\textsuperscript{11} The diameter of the tokens is 25 mm, however, which suggests that they were ultimately intended to pass as shillings; this is how Miss Banks describes her specimens of which she had three, two in copper and one in silver.\textsuperscript{12} Stainton, on the basis of a letter from Fullarton to Matthew Young which I will come to shortly, gave the token a ‘nominal date’ of 1799.\textsuperscript{13} We can, however, bring this forward into the previous year because Miss Banks recorded the acquisition of the first of her copper pieces as having been on 6 December 1798. Unfortunately she does not date her silver specimen.

Stainton, comparing the obverse portrait with that of a James Tassie medallion of 1787, confirmed Sharp’s identification of the subject as Adam Smith although it has to be admitted that Milton’s treatment of the political economist conveys little of the character or immediacy of Tassie’s original, taken from life in Smith’s sixty-fourth year.

\textsuperscript{9} Charles Pye, \textit{Provincial Coins and Tokens issued from the Year 1787 to the Year 1801} (Birmingham and London, 1801). p. 6. The halfpenny is engraved as no. 7 on plate 4.

\textsuperscript{10} Stainton, as in n. 5, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{11} Pye, as in n. 9, p. 6. The shilling is engraved as no. 8 on plate 4. Some editions of ‘Pye’ omit this engraving from plate 4 while others have the two versions of the plate.

\textsuperscript{12} [Sarah Sophia Banks], as in n. 5.

\textsuperscript{13} Stainton, as in n. 5, p. 147.
Miss Banks was already aware that the obverse represented Adam Smith because the first of her copper pieces is boldly engraved with the political economist's name (Fig. 2).

Tom Stainton suggested that the reverse type was copied – "but mirrored in the way of engravers" – from John Kirk's memorial medal to the third duke of Atholl (1774). This notion might be thought to have some merit since, though apparently unknown to Stainton, its associated legend is taken from the Aeneid (Book 2, 4) and Miss Banks was under the impression that the weeping figure represented Andromache, presumably shown mourning the death of her husband Hector during the siege of Troy. Unhappily, the actual quotation has no relevance to Andromache, and it is also unclear why Miss Banks should have been so specific in her attribution. The image can, in fact, be shown to derive, once more from James Tassie; this time from one of the reproductions of ancient and modern gems for which he was perhaps more widely known to his contemporaries than for his portrait medallions. These were much in vogue among London jewelers and would have been very familiar objects to Young and to Milton. The impression in question (Fig. 3b) copied a neo-classical sardonyx by the celebrated gem-engraver Giovanni Pichler (1734–91) – itself based on a bas-relief in the Capitol (the Court of the Conservators' Palace) in Rome with numismatic antecedents in the celebrated 'Judaea Capta' motif of coins of Vespasian (Fig. 3c) – that Fullarton himself could well have seen in Naples in 1770–71 when he was on the Grand Tour. Stainton thought that the type was 'out of tune' with the earlier spirit of 'Scotia Rediviva' but doubtless it was seen at the time as a classical image symbolizing the sense of loss occasioned by the death of Adam Smith whose advanced ideas Fullarton greatly admired. In this sense it marries well with the obverse depiction of Smith as an 'ancient worthy' in the manner of a Cicero or a Marcus Aurelius.

Fullarton quickly abandoned the projected 'Adam Smith' token issue. Perhaps the images of the token were considered to be too subtle for an Ayrshire public. A more prosaic and much more likely reason is that Milton had problems with the striking of the dies since it is evident, from Miss Banks's second copper specimen acquired on 7 February 1799, that a flaw was developing through the upper shield on the reverse. In any event Fullarton had already secured the ear of the Prince of Wales and on 10 January 1799 we find him writing to Matthew Young cancelling the order and announcing his intention of embarking on a totally new venture. It is to this venture and its subsequent history that I would like to devote the remainder of this address.
The ‘Prince of Wales’ Pattern Coinage – 1799

The Troon Canal promoters seem progressively to have moved away from the idea of issuing promissory tokens. The ‘Adam Smith’ shilling bore no reference to any redeeming authority although it was perhaps an unfinished pattern and the issuing authority would, in any case, have been well known in its immediate area of circulation. Although paying lip service to the example set by the Parys Mines Company and John Wilkinson they increasingly fought shy of the responsibilities of an identifiably redeemable currency. Rather, they saw their need for copper and silver currency more effectively – and profitably – being met by the provision of an ersatz coinage masquerading as the real thing. Their new scheme was set in motion on 11 December 1798 when Fullarton sought the Prince of Wales’s authority to have the latter’s ‘Profile, – Emblems & Arms, impressed on such Tokens as the Troon Company, may have occasion to Circulate’. 17

As a significant quid pro quo the company proposed, on the basis of a contract of not less than three years, to:

‘purchase from the proper Officers of the Duchy of Cornwall, as much Copper, and Silver being the Produce of the Prince’s Mines as shall Yield to His Royal Highness £1000 Additional Revenue per Month, during the whole Period, that the Company shall exercise the Privilege or Permission in Question. Provided that during the Period to be specified, the Company may be assured of Receiving Copper at a price not exceeding 13d per lib: and Standard Silver at 5/- per Oz. It will occur to you that this proposal being calculated at the present Price of Copper and Standard Silver, any considerable rise in these Articles, might not only render it impossible for the Company to afford the Monthly Rate proposed, but might altogether preclude the issuing of Promissory or other Tokens. This however at present, seems by no means, a probable case’. 18

A month later the scheme had secured the Prince’s approval in principle and Fullarton was asking Matthew Young to:

‘take the trouble to get Mr. Milton without Delay to execute a Die for A Shilling Coin. On one Side, The Head of the Prince of Wales, and round the Head these words, Georgius G.P. S.S. C D. – 1799. On the other Side, Engravings of the Arms, and Emblems of the Prince of Wales, in four Compartments, such as those of the Mint Shillings of George 2d. & George 3rd., taking particular care, that nothing be engraved which can interfere with the Arms and Emblems of His Majesty. At the same time rendering the Profile, Arms and Emblems of the Prince of Wales as much as possible compleat and proper to pass in currency. Round the Emblems there should be Letters expressing :-Regni Scotiae Senescallus – and in the Interval between the Compartments of Emblems, four Coronets or other Emblems of the Prince. But of all this, you and Mr. Milton are the best Judges, and will I am confident execute it speedily and well. I shall be in London by the 23d. January, and shall hope soon after to have the Die delivered to me. As there will be others required for Half Crowns, Sixpences and Halfpence, you will take particular care not to mention any thing of this Matter to any one, except Mr. Milton, and request them [sic] to keep it perfectly secret till all be ready for issuing.’ 18

Total secrecy was not maintained, however, for on 7 February Matthew Young let slip to Miss Banks what was afoot. Her brother, Sir Joseph Banks, a prominent member of the Privy Council committee on coin, recounted what happened next in a memorandum appended to a copy of Fullarton’s letter that he secured from Milton.

‘On Thursday morning, Feb 7th, Mr. Young, to whom this letter is addressed, sold to my sister a Two Guinea piece of Geo. 3d. for 5 Guineas; & he then informed her of this transaction. The same Evening I desired Milton to call upon me, on the succeeding morning, & got from him this letter & the Coin: he told me that he had heard Col. Fullarton had lately been in Ireland, & on his return had written to Young, to say that he supposed the circulation of his money would be much greater than he had originally supposed, & desired to know whether a person could be found to contract for a large quantity of silver.

I take the Canal to be that from Troon point to Ricarton [Riccarton Bridge just south of Kilmarnock], with the harbour of Troon in the Shire of Ayr, which passed in 1796 or 1797.’ 19

17 Appendix, 1.
18 Appendix, 3.
19 Appendix, 4. Although successful in the Commons the Troon Canal Bill failed in the Lords in July 1797.
Banks acted quickly and, despite protests from Fullarton supported by an opinion from William Grant, an eminent KC and later Master of the Rolls, Banks, advised by Lord Liverpool, was able to exert sufficient pressure on Young and Milton to scotch the colonel's project of producing token coinage so like the real thing as to confound the unwary and encourage fraud. The arguments put forward by both sides are set out in the documents printed in the Appendix. By July 1799 Fullarton was persuaded to drop the coinage scheme although he could not accept Banks's argument that he would be infringing any law by producing coin that did not actually copy the regal currency, a view already advanced to Liverpool by the Attorney General. The matter ended with an agreement that Milton should finish his engravings provided he kept them in his own possession. In the event the canal scheme was abandoned because of costs far exceeding John Rennie's original estimate of £36,950, disagreements among the partners, especially between Lord Titchfield and Fullarton and because of Fullarton's appointment to Trinidad and the personal imbroglio with Picton that followed it. By 1805, increasingly financially embarrassed, he had sold off his Troon lands to Lord Titchfield, who, a year or two before Fullarton's death in 1808, was building a railway as a far cheaper alternative to the canal.

The shilling that Banks refers to in his memorandum quickly passed to his sister and is evidently the piece registered in her catalogue as having entered her cabinet four days later, on 11 February 1799.

In total Miss Banks lists five Fullarton 'Prince of Wales' patterns which, after her death in 1818, passed to the British Museum. It seems sensible to begin one's examination of Fullarton's anomalous pieces with Miss Banks's specimens since she records the date of acquisition in each case and we can be absolutely certain that they were struck by Milton. They are listed and illustrated below (© The British Museum) with certain features noted.

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20 Reproduced by permission of the Public Record Office and the Natural History Museum. See also Stainton, as in n. 5, pp. 148-49.
21 University of Nottingham Library, as in n. 3, PI E18/1/1/3-6; James Paterson, History of the County of Ayr (Paisley and Ayr, 1852), II, p. 22; C.F. Dendy Marshall, A History of British Railways down to the year 1830 (London 1938), pp. 131-4 with plan in Fig. 66.
22 BM. C&M: E. 2834.
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Fig. 6. Pattern halfpenny in copper (acquired 15 August 1799).\textsuperscript{23}
11.69 g. Cud under bust, the treatment of which differs from that on the higher value patterns; reverse die has unbroken label of difference on the impaled Scottish arms.

Fig. 7. Pattern half-crown in tin (acquired 20 November 1799).\textsuperscript{24}
11.91 g. No cud under bust.

Fig. 8. Pattern shilling in tin (acquired 20 November 1799).\textsuperscript{25}
5.46 g. No cud under bust.

Fig. 9. Pattern sixpence in tin (acquired 20 November 1799).\textsuperscript{26}
3.54 g. Stop before obverse date; no flaw on bust below ear; reverse shields disposed wrongly.

\textsuperscript{23} BM, C&M: E. 2835.
\textsuperscript{24} BM, C&M: E. 2833.
\textsuperscript{25} BM, C&M: E. 2836.
\textsuperscript{26} BM, C&M: E. 2837.
Bearing in mind Miss Banks’s acquisitiveness and her brother’s interest in the affair it is significant that apart from the initial shilling – a thin piece of 4.42 g. – there are no silver pieces in her collection although these are well-known today in all Fullarton’s denominations. The presumption must be that Milton – in view of his unfortunate – probably naive – excursion into the manufacture of dies for counterfeit foreign gold – had been sufficiently frightened by Sir Joseph into restricting his Fullarton strikings to base metal; otherwise other precious metal specimens would surely have found their way into Miss Banks’s cabinet. Her dates of acquisition suggest that the halfpenny presented no problem and was struck as a separate issue in the summer of 1799 and that the other patterns were completed as a single group in ‘soft metal’ or tin in the autumn, Fullarton, as we have seen, having committed himself to the production of the dies.

It may be, of course, that Milton did strike some silver specimens other than his original shilling but, for obvious reasons, kept them well hidden from the Banks family. While this is by no means impossible it does not seem likely bearing in mind his apparently close relationship with Banks. If this reading is correct any silver Fullarton pattern other than a thin shilling must be subsequent to 1799 and struck by someone other than Milton.

This interpretation is borne out by an authority who had the benefit of knowing Matthew Young fairly intimately although his evidence takes us on some three decades or more. In 1834 Thomas Sharp listed the copper halfpenny in his Chetwynd catalogue but in his rather garbled commentary he seemed to suggest that it was intended to circulate as a shilling. Slightly obliquely, Chetwynd himself clarified Sharp’s apparent solecism in a corrective footnote pasted in to the relevant page, explaining that ‘For the same purpose dies were prepared for the striking of shillings smaller than those for the halfpenny, which they resemble in every other respect, except for the Legend of the Reverse which reads “SENES CALLUS, REGNI SCOT.IAE.”’ A few pieces only were struck in silver for presents. He went on, significantly:

‘Dies were also prepared for halfcrowns and sixpences exactly like the halfpenny, size only excepted. It does not appear that any impressions, except a very few in soft metal, were taken off at the time; but afterwards there were some struck in silver from the dies which were in Mr. Young’s possession’.

One can only conclude from the evidence of Miss Banks’s cabinet and Chetwynd’s commentary that only silver shillings struck on thin flans, copper halfpennies and ‘soft metal’ or tin halfcrowns and sixpences can be indubitably accepted as original Milton strikings.

If what Chetwynd has to say is true, and there is no reason to doubt him, it is clear that after the dust had settled and both Milton and Fullarton had departed the scene – and probably more significantly the Banks brother (1820) and sister (1818) too – Matthew Young quietly produced silver specimens to order for collectors from the original Milton dies that had come into his possession. According to William Boyne they were ‘of beautiful workmanship, and are still very rare’. There are uncorroborated indications that this was in the late 1820s. But this was not the end of the story. Moving on another seventy years, W. J. Davis, noting that the restrikes were on thick flans, listed specimens of the patterns in gold, silver, copper and white metal (as he describes the tin) and added that ‘Subsequently to the restriking by Matthew Young, the dies were taken to the late W. J. Taylor, who supplied the tokens to order as required, and those in gold are of yet more recent striking’. It is not inconceivable that the Young restrikes were actually made by Taylor who set up his own business in London as early as 1829 but the implication of Davis’s comment is that this was not so.

27 A relationship posited by Stainton (as in n. 5, p. 136) in respect of Milton’s medallic commissions for the Royal Society in 1799 and the Board of Agriculture in 1802. It is not without interest, too, that Milton’s first medallic commission, in 1785, was for a Lincolnshire society, the Banks’s home county.

28 Sharp, as in n. 15, p. 219, n. (a). As already noted the obverse bust of the halfpenny, pace Chetwynd, differs from that of the higher value patterns.

29 The recoinage and exchange of 1817 may well have played its part, too, in rendering the old type silver coinage obsolete – its currency was declared illegal on 1 March 1817 – and thus removing the question of any breach of the prerogative in striking something that now had only curiosity value. William Boyne, The Silver Tokens of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1866), p. 25.

30 Frank Purvey, in Seaby’s Coins and Tokens of Scotland (London, 1972), p. 129, suggested that this was ‘about 1828’ but offered no evidence for this statement and I have found no corroboration to support it.

31 W. J. Davis, The Nineteenth Century Token Coinage (London, 1904), pp. 199–200. The gold specimen (half-crown and sixpence), which may well be by Taylor too, do not seem to have surfaced until the Murdoch sale of 1903: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 11–13 May 1903, lot 373. They are not mentioned by Boyne, as in n. 29.
The burden of my enquiry now is to see whether at this great remove it is possible to differentiate between Young and Taylor restrikes. Unfortunately, one does not have a great amount of material to work with but my preliminary assessment, such as it is, is based on specimens in the British Museum, certain other public collections, A.H. Baldwin and Sons (and here I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Michael Sharp), my own collection, that of Peter Mitchell and sale catalogues. In this exercise I have been helped by the existence of two dies, now in the Royal Mint Museum through the good offices of Peter Mitchell. One of these – a halfpenny reverse – which must have been fabricated after 1830 and more likely twenty years later, came, as did the other – a sixpence obverse –, via Dr Bousfield, from the Taylor workshop.

The halfpenny reverse die, which bears the stamp RUN and [G LIN]GARD on its shank, is the product of George Lingard, a die-forger and press manufacturer who was in business in Birmingham between about 1830 and 1854. Although theoretically his dates could associate the die with Matthew Young who did not die until 1838 the balance of probability points to Taylor as its engraver. Its strikings, in silver, copper and tin are all easily identifiable since the label of difference extending over the impaled Scottish arms is faulty. It is definitely not Milton’s original die although its paired obverse die, from the evidence of all the extant ‘Fullarton’ coins I have seen, obviously is.

The second die, for a sixpence obverse, presents us with exactly the opposite scenario. Stamped LONDON RUN and D D, it is more problematic since I have not yet been able to identify the forger but it comes ultimately from the same source as the halfpenny die, Dr Bousfield. It bears no relation to Milton’s original obverse in Miss Banks’s collection – most obviously in lacking a stop before the date and in having a flaw on the bust below the ear – but the reverse, invariably associated with it, is original; all my own specimens, in silver, copper, tin and aluminium accord with this pairing. Aluminium, a comparatively rare metal in the 1850s or ’60s when I presume these pieces to have been made, is known to have appealed to Taylor when he was striving to fabricate unusual pieces for the collectors’ market. It must surely be a Taylor die.

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32 I am indebted to Marion Archibald for bringing these dies to my attention and to Graham Dyer for allowing me to examine them and arranging their photography.

33 This is the first halfpenny (‘one and sixpence’) die listed by Davis, as in n. 31, p. 199, nos 5–8 and the second halfpenny die referred to by L.V. Larsen, ‘The Fullarton Token Patterns’, Seaby’s Coin and Medal Bulletin (May 1966), p. 156, although they did not recognise the fault.

34 It should be noted, however, that a halfpenny and a sixpence in the British Museum, struck from these non-original dies, are recorded as Young productions. Since, however, they were acquired from a Mr. E. Tucker, probably a dealer, as late as September 1877 it is almost certain that Taylor made them.
My conclusion so far, trying to assimilate the numismatic and other evidence, tends towards the following:

- That apart from copper halfpennies and thin silver shillings weighing no more than say 4.5 grammes all Milton's original Fullarton patterns were almost certainly made of 'soft metal' or tin;
- That, while it cannot be absolutely ruled out that some quality silver and copper pieces - heavy and well struck and showing little or no die wear or corrosion - may have been struck by Milton, the balance of probability must be that these are the rare pieces struck from original dies by Matthew Young in the 1820s to meet specific orders from collectors;
- That specious Fullarton patterns made from cleaned but worn and corroded Milton dies obtained after the death of Young or from newly engraved dies, were struck by Taylor after 1838 and most likely not until the 1850s or '60s or even later. These make up the bulk of the so-called Fullarton patterns available to collectors today and include the halfpennies and sixpences struck from the two dies illustrated above.

Taylor, of course, did not restrict himself to the production of seemingly authentic pieces but indulged himself in the creation of strange mulings. A 'Prince of Wales' halfpenny obverse is mulled with a 'William Wallace' reverse (Davis: Ayrshire 11), a 'Prinny' shilling obverse with a Fiuri gambling ticket reverse (Hawkins, p. 84, G6), and even more perversely a 'Prinny' halfpenny obverse (Davis: Ayrshire 12) and a shilling obverse with a Boulton 'Isaac Swainson' reverse (D&H: Ayrshire 8). This last fabrication may conceivably give us some date as to Taylor's antics with Fullarton dies since he does not seem to have acquired his cache of Boulton dies until about 1862\(^{35}\) but, of course, he is known to have been active until shortly before his death at the age of eighty three in 1885.

I will conclude with one last oddity in the Taylor saga. This is a curiosity which surfaced in a recent sale and which to my chagrin I failed to obtain; it is a white metal or tin mule of a signed Taylor obverse of 'Queen Victoria' and a Milton 'Conquered Province' reverse.\(^{36}\) I have so far failed to identify the obverse, which is not listed in R.N.P. Hawkins's Dictionary of Medalet and Check Makers.

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\(^{35}\) David Vice, 'A Fresh Insight into Soho Mint Restrikes and those responsible for their Manufacture, Format, 52 (September 1995), pp. 3-14. 1862 is the date given by Bousfield for Taylor's first restrikes, ibid., p. 14.

\(^{36}\) Dix, Noonan, Webb Sale 55 (8 October 2002), lot 152.
The piece is important because the reverse has the slight upper shield flaw referred to earlier. A 'true' 'Adam Smith' halfpenny in the same sale has the flaw much more developed, extending into the field above and below the device. This piece (lot 151) must, therefore, be a Taylor production and throws into question the veracity of every 'Adam Smith' shilling with an advanced flaw.

Fig. 12. Taylor's 'Restrike Mule'.
(Reproduced by courtesy of Dix, Noon, Webb).

The task of trying to distinguish the restrikes of Matthew Young from those of Taylor in any meaningful way is fraught with difficulty. The non-original halfpenny and sixpence dies are a starting point and much may be gained from die cracking and corrosion. Further work is being undertaken with a metrological analysis and detailed die study of the Fullarton pieces in the British Museum, my own cabinet and that of Peter Mitchell and I hope to be able, in a supplementary paper, to publish the results.

APPENDIX

COPY EXTRACTS FROM FULLARTON CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE TROON CANAL COMPANY'S PROPOSED 'PRINCE OF WALES' TOKENS

1. Fullarton to Thomas Tyrwhitt, the Prince of Wales's Private Secretary – 11 December 1798 (PRO: BT6/118):

A Respectable Company is desirous of carrying into effect, an extensive Work of Great Publick utility. In the execution, which will require several years, large sums must be expended in Purchases, and in the Payment of Labour. Our Scotch Banks, conduct their Transactions, almost entirely by Paper currency. This Renders it impossible to procure Specie and Occasions great Inconvenience in all Publick Undertakings.

In order to remedy this Evil, The Company in Question, proposes to adopt the Plan of Lord Uxbridge, and the Anglesea Copper Company, – of John Wilkinson & Co. & many other Associations in various Counties, who have issued Provincial Tokens, or Promissory Coins. The Circulation of these is usually confined to the Neighbourhood in which they are issued and is regulated by the Credit of the Company, responsible for exchanging them on Demand, as well as by the Fineness, Weight and Value of the Tokens themselves, whether of Copper or Silver. You know that the Prince of Wales is not only Duke of Cornwall, but Great Steward or Seneschall of Scotland. In the 1st. Capacity, His Royal Highness has certainly a great deal of Copper, and I presume, ought to have a Quantity of Silver issuing from the Lead in His Royalties of Devon and Cornwall. In the 2nd. Capacity He is the Paramount of Scotland, and in Particular of this Part of the Kingdom, where the Feudal Tenures, in general hold directly from the Prince.

Under these Circumstances, my Devouement, to His Royal Highness; my desire to promote the Welfare of the County which I represent; and the Benefit of the Company and Publick Work in Question, all induce me to solicit that the Prince of Wales will be graciously Pleased, to grant His Royal Permission and Authority, to have Engravings of his Profile, – Emblems & Arms, impressed on such Tokens as the Troon Company, may have occasion to Circulate. Should His Royal Highness comply with this Solicitation, for any Period not less than Three Years, I am Authorized to Engage on the part of the Company, to purchase from the proper Officers of the Duchy of Cornwall, as much Copper, and Silver being the
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Produce of the Prince's Mines as shall Yield to His Royal Highness £1000 Additional Revenue per Month, during the whole Period, that the Company shall exercise the Privilege or Permission in Question. Provided that during the Period to be specified, the Company may be assured of Receiving Copper at a price not exceeding 13d per lib: and Standard Silver at 5/- per Oz: It will occur to you that this proposal being calculated at the present Price of Copper and Standard Silver, any considerable rise in these Articles, might not only render it impossible for the Company to afford the Monthly Rate proposed, but might altogether preclude the issuing of Promissory or other Tokens. This however at present, seems by no means, a probable case.

2. Fullarton to the Lord Warden of the Stannaries – 5 January 1799 (PRO: BT6/118):
I have received the Honor of your Letter, and beg leave to express my best acknowledgements, for your attention to the subject of my Application. I have not lost a moment in exerting myself to ascertain, as far as in my Power, the Extent of the Transaction in Question.

There can be no doubt, that while the Price of Copper and Silver continues at the present moderate rate, the Operation seems by no means, a probable case.

In the meantime, I shall direct Specimens to be prepared for your inspection, and shall have the Honor of presenting them soon after my return to London; and it will afford me the highest satisfaction if you shall think them deserving the Approbation of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

3. Fullarton to Mr. [Matthew] Young – 10 January 1799 (PRO: BT6/118):
I received your Specimens in course, and would have written to you concerning them. But since my Arrival here a better Arrangement has taken place. On behalf of the Company, which I mentioned to you, I applied through the proper official Channels to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, for leave to impress Engravings of the Profile Arms and Emblems on such Coin as the Company in question may have occasion to circulate. The Lord Warden of the Stanneries and Duchy of Cornwall has officially informed me that my Request will be complied with, provided the Transaction is of sufficient Extent to render it an object to the Parties concerned. In consequence I have informed the Lord Warden, that on my return to London, I shall lay before him Specimens for the Approbation of His Royal Highness. You know that the Prince of Wales is not only Duke of Cornwall, but High Steward or Seneschallus of Scotland, and in these Capacities entitled to grant the Privilege I solicited. I desire that you will take the trouble to get Mr. Milton without Delay to execute a Die for A Shilling Coin. On one Side, The Head of the Prince of Wales, and round the Head these words, Georgius G.P. S.S. C.D. – 1799.

On the other Side, Engravings of the Arms, and Emblems of the Prince of Wales, in four Compartments, such as those of the Mint Shillings of George 2d. & George 3rd., taking particular care, that nothing be engraved which can interfere with the Arms and Emblems of His Majesty. At the same time rendering the Profile, Arms and Emblems of the Prince of Wales as much as possible compleat and proper to pass in currency. Round the Emblems there should be Letters expressing Regni Scotiae Senescallus – and in the Interval between the Compartments of Emblems, four Coronets or other Emblems of the Prince. But of all this, you and Mr. Milton are the best Judges, and will I am confident execute it speedily and well. I shall be in London by the 23d. January, and shall hope soon after to have the Die delivered to me. As there will be others required for Half Crowns, Sixpences and Halfpence, you will take particular care not to mention any thing of this Matter to any one, except Mr. Milton, and request them [sic] to keep it perfectly secret till all be ready for issuing.

On Thursday morning, Feb’y 7th., Mr. Young, to whom this letter is addressed, sold to my sister a Two Guinea piece of Geo. 3d. for 5 Guineas; & he then informed her of this transaction. The same Evening I desired Milton to call upon me, on the succeeding morning, & got from him this letter & the Coin: he told me that he had heard Col. Fullarton had lately been in Ireland, & on his return had written to Young, to he told me that he had heard Col. Fullarton had lately been in Ireland, & on his return had written to Young, to say that he supposed the circulation of his money would be much greater than he had originally supposed, & desired to know whether a person could be found to contract for a large quantity of silver.

I take the Canal to be that from Troon point to Ricarton, with the harbour of Troon in the Shire of Ayr, which passed in 1796 or 1797.

I return you the Letter you communicated to me on Friday last; & I congratulate you & all parties concern’d on your prudence in asking advice on the delicate subject to which it relates.

Coining in Gold or Silver I find is considered by the common Law of England as a special prerogative of the Crown; & any subject therefore who coins, or who is accessory [sic] to Coining in those metals, is guilty of one of the highest.

39 A slight variant of this letter, also a copy, exists in NHM: DTC, XI, 160-161.
misdemeanors [sic] a subject is capable of committing; of course liable to fine & imprisonment of more than ordinary severity.

I am sorry this will prevent you from undertaking what would have been a profitable employment to you; but I conclude the Company must have Copper Tokens, as they cannot have Silver Coins, & that you will be employed in Engraving them; if you wish to speak to me on this or any other subject, I shall be glad to see you any morning about 10 o’Clock.


I take the liberty of troubling you on a subject, which I believe has already been in part explained to you by Mr. Milton. A respectable Company in this County are desirous of carrying into effect a very considerable and useful public work. They are also extremely anxious to remove a great impediment to all large undertakings in this quarter, arising from the total deficiency of all Copper & Silver currency. With this view, the first idea was to issue Promissory or Provincial tokens under the firm of the Company. Several objections having occurred to Promissory tokens, application was made to the proper Officers of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, to grant or obtain His Royal Highness’s [sic] permission to have his Profile, Arms, and Emblems, impressed on such Provincial or Promissory tokens as the Company might have occasion to issue. This application was made under the impression, that any person or Company, by the Law of the Land, might issue such tokens as they think proper, provided there be no imitation of the current Coin of the Realm. And, in the next place, that His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, might legally grant permission to have his Profile, Arms and Emblems impressed on promissory Tokens. For it appears that such permission, not only has been granted in former times but that in the early part of last century a mint was established at Aberystwith in Wales for coining Welch Silver with the Prince of Wales’s Plumes. I understand, however, that Mr. Milton has been informed by you that the transaction is irregular in its present form. But that you had the goodness to mention your inclination to put the Company in the proper train for removing any objection to the operation, which is so much wanted for the benefit of this part of the Country.

You will oblige me very much by communicating to me your opinion and advice on this business; in order that I may put the parties concerned in the right road. If in addition to permission from the Prince of Wales, any application is necessary to Government or to Parliament, you will oblige me by suggesting the proper mode of bringing forward the business, and, on receiving your instruction, the Company will take such measure as may meet your approbation.


Milton, who has already smarted for the legal interpretation of an imaginary Crime, is, of course, very careful that his future undertakings may never hereafter lead him into difficulties; and consequently when a new Proposition is made to him frequently consults me.

He did so some time ago on the subject of your Company’s proposal to him to sink Dies for Crowns, ½ Crowns, Shillings, & Sixpences in Silver; and I advised him by no means to embark in such an undertaking.

My reasons were, that I conceived the Coinage of the Precious Metals to be a prerogative strictly inherent in the Crown, and in the Crown only; never having heard that any Prince of Wales had at any period of our History attempted to assume it: I consequently conceived that you must be mistaken in supposing that the Prince had granted permission for his R. Highness’ Head, Arms, & Emblems to be put upon any Coins whatever.

Respecting the Mint at Aberystwith, that I well remember was under the immediate control of the King’s Officers of His Majesties Mint in the Tower, and the Chief Officers of it actually under indenture to the Master of the Mint in the Tower.

Impressed with these opinions, not one of which I have the least reason to alter, it is impossible for me to give you any advice towards obtaining the Powers you wish for; but I beg leave seriously to advise you, in case the Professional men consulted by the Company should differ in opinion from me, that you will not proceed till you have consulted the Lord advocate, or some other High Law Officer; as it appears to me very imprudent for any one to do an Act which may bear the legal interpretation of a High Misdemeanour, at least without the sanction of the first Law Officers of the Crown.


I request you will accept my best acknowledgments for your friendship & attention to my application, & for your advice respecting the business of my former Letter.

In consequence of your suggestion, the Company on whose behalf I troubled you, have obtained an answer in proper legal form to four queries submitted to M’. Grant M.P., King’s Council, & chief Justice of Chester. I take the liberty of enclosing the queries & M’. Grant’s answers.

His observations on the Tools and implements mentioned in Stat. 8 & 9th, Wm. 3d, Chap. 26, apply to milling, which was not in the contemplation of the Company, even if leave could have been obtained for so doing.

You will add to the many marks of kindness with which you have honored me, if you inform M’. Milton or me how far the answers to the queries appear satisfactory in removing the objections which occurred.
Opinion of Sir William Grant as to Promissory Tokens – 16 May 1799 (NHM: DTC, XI, 229–230):

1st. Whether there is any legal objection to the issuing of provincial or private promissory tokens of Copper or Silver with such Profiles, Arms, & Emblems impressed on them, as the Company may think proper; provided the same exhibit no imitation nor resemblance of his Majesty’s current Coin.

2nd. Whether on obtaining permission & authority from the proper Officers of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Cornwall & Seneschallus or Steward of Scotland, His Royal Highness’s profile, Arms, & Emblems might legally be impress’d on such provincial or promissory tokens of Copper or of Silver; the same exhibiting no imitation or resemblance of his Majesty’s current coin?

3rd. In the event of their [sic] being any legal objection to the issuing of such provincial or promissory tokens, what is the authority necessary to be obtained under his Majesty’s Government or from Parliament, & what is the proper mode of application, in order to enable the Company to proceed with Undertakings highly interesting to the prosperity of Scotland.

4th. Whether, in defraying the necessary charges, the Company could obtain Authority from Government for an establishment in Scotland, similar to the subordinate Mint at Aberystwyth last Century, under the immediate controul of the King’s Officers of his Majesty’s Mint in the Tower, & under Indenture to the Master of the Mint in the Tower, or otherwise as you may advise?

Answer to the 1st. Query. I know of nothing to prevent the issuing of Copper tokens of the kind herein mentioned. But it would be impossible, I imagine, to Coin Silver without some of the Tools or Instruments mentioned in the Stat. 8 & 9 W3 c.26, & which none can have in their possession except persons belonging to the Mint or Authorized by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury. Without being so authorized, it will be altogether unsafe to use or even to possess any Implements for the coinage of Silver.

To the 2nd. I know of no Law to prevent it.

To the 3rd. There is no Law that directly prohibits the making of Silver pieces, not resembling the Coin of this or any other Country. Therefore I apprehend that the only Licence necessary is that which I have already mentioned, to authorize the use & possession of the Implements of Coinage.

To the 4th. I have no means of knowing what the disposition of Government might be in this respect.


By the advice of Sir Joseph Banks, the Company, on whose behalf you applied to Mr. Milton, directed four queries to be laid before one of the most eminent of his Majesty’s Counsel, Mr. Grant M.P., Chief Justice of Chester – a Copy of the queries & of Mr. Grant’s answers is enclosed to you; & Sir Joseph Banks will receive another Copy by this post. Mr. Milton will perceive that there is no legal objection whatever to the transaction proposed. For you know that Silver & Copper tokens are prepared with exactly the same Tools & Implements; & Mr. Grant’s observations on the Tools & instruments, mentioned in the 8 & 9th. Wm. 3rd. Chap. 26, apply to the Milling which the Company had no intention of attempting, even if they obtained permission for so doing.

You will take the trouble to see Mr. Milton, & inform me whether he has any farther doubts upon the subject – or if he thinks any further inquiry necessary. If he wishes that any additional explanation should be obtained, be pleased to state the particulars required to satisfy him & you. But it appears impossible that there should be any farther hesitation on the business; & therefore I shall take it for granted that you will proceed with all possible dispatch to fulfill [sic] the wishes of the Company, already too long delayed, and that you will mention how soon all may be ready to proceed to business.


As the matter of Coining Silver Tokens has become, in my mind, after the perusal of Mr. Grant’s opinion, a fit object for the consideration of Government, I will, if you approve, lay the state of the facts as they now stand before the Committee of P.C. for Coins, of which you know that I am a member.

In the mean time, allow me to say that I cannot agree with you in opinion that the act quoted by Mr. Grant bears only on the tools used for Milling. Presses, Cutters, & other Tools essential to a Coinage of Tokens are actually enumerated, though similar Tools are used in our manufactures, & have not while they are so used hitherto been legally questioned, if they are applied to the use of a Coinage, the very thing against which the Act is level’d. I have my strong doubts whether any artist ought in prudence to hazard the decision of a Jury on a plain letter in the Act, when the crime it is meant to prevent is, if not explained away, liable to the penalties of high Treason.

Respecting the establishment of a subordinate Mint for the use of the Company, I apprehend it is not likely to be granted if asked for, because Scotland has a mint of her own secured to her by the articles of union. We must, however, recollect that the Scotch Mint is confined by the same articles to use the weights & alloys of each denomination used in the Mint of the Tower, & the same denominations also & no others; a rule to which all subordinate Mints have at all times been subjected.

I wonder these things did not strike you before, & also that neither you or Mr. Grant recollected an act passed during the last session of Parliament, prohibiting the coinage of Silver in the Mint in the Tower, which, I suppose, includes a general prohibition.
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I have this Instant received the Favour of your Letter of this Day’s Date, with a Letter from Col. Fullarton inclosed in it, and the Queries proposed to Mr. Grant, & the Answers returned to them. I confess that, by Mr. Grant’s Answers, He appears to me not to be fully Master of the Law on the Question; And I recollect, from the Conversation I had with the Attorney General, at which you, I think, were present, he inclined to the Sort of Opinion given by Mr. Grant; which is, that any One may issue Coins, even of Silver, provided they call them Tokens, & that they do not exhibit any Imitations or Resemblances of His Majesty’s Current Coin. This Doctrine appears to me to be contrary to the opinion of Sr. Mathew Hale, and would, if practised to a considerable Extent, be the cause of infinite Frauds & Confusion in the Money of the Kingdom. It is clear, however, from Mr. Grant’s Opinion, that Mr. Fullarton cannot coin silver; because the Persons employed by him cannot have in their Possession the Instruments necessary for that Purpose. The Interpretation given to this Act by Col. Fullarton, that it relates only to the Instruments necessary for Milling, is certainly unfounded. I will think, however, more on this Subject. As this Undertaking is to be carried on in Scotland, the Law Officer to whom it should be referred, is the Lord Advocate of Scotland; unless he should desire that the Attorney & Solicitor General should be joined with him in the Reference. When I come to Town, I will endeavour to see the Lord Advocate of Scotland; and, when I next have the Pleasure of meeting you, I will talk to you more on this Subject...


I delayed thanking you for your obliging information on the subject of Copper & Silver tokens, as I had some Expectations of leaving this for London, & wished rather to have consulted you in Person than by Letters. My Friends here, for whom I have troubled you, do not wish any application made to the Privy Council, till I have an opportunity of seeing you. In the meantime I shall hazard one observation on the subject. Respecting the illegality of forming any token, medal or other Impression, which cannot be effected without the same instruments as are used for preparing & impressing Coin, It does appear now to me that all the Innumerable Medals in Honor of Various Distinguished Persons should come under the Penalties of High Treason & that they are only tolerated by Sufferance. If this is law, I am sure it ought not to be Law. But I read the acts very differently; for I conceived the Criminality to consist only in Engraving to Coinage the Resemblance of His Majesty’s Currency. I understand, however, you have no objection to Mr. Milton finishing the Engravings, provided he keeps them in his own possession. I therefore shall desire him to do so — on the footing, at least, of the Medals; unless you are serious in thinking that no Medal can be legally formed.

I hope you will forgive the Annoyance I have given you on this subject ...

ADDENDUM

Raspe (as in n. 14, p. 457) noted that Tassie’s ‘A Conquered Province’ (Raspe 7867) was copied from a Pichler sardonyx — it is signed TIXAEP in its exergue — in the collection of Lord Fortrose (later earl of Seaforth) who lived in Naples in the 1760s and 1770s. Fullarton spent some time in Naples during his Grand Tour and would have been familiar with Fortrose’s collections. Fullarton (the background seated figure) is depicted in a painting by Pietro Fabri of a fencing scene in Fortrose’s Neapolitan apartment. I am indebted to Dr. Claudia Wagner of the Beazley Archive, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and to James Holloway, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, for their assistance in establishing the true source of the reverse of the ‘Adam Smith’ shilling and to the latter for drawing my attention to the Fabri painting.