

William Monter

English Private Money, 1648–1672 When England's successive central governments failed to make any of its lowest denomination coins after 1644, more than 8,000 ordinary English people and eighty communities soon began supplying a fully monetized economy with their own copper-alloy farthings (and later, halfpence) to provide what some tokens called "necessary change." This situation persisted until the Privy Council, shocked by privately made pennies, prohibited all private coin tokens in 1672 and replaced them with England's first mechanically struck low-end copper coins.

The abundant surviving evidence about England's private coin tokens was best preserved in a collection begun in 1905 by an American woman, Emery May Holden Norweb, in Cleveland, Ohio, that eventually included about 13,000 items, including many duplicates. Over 6,000 of these tokens survive today, about two-thirds in the British Museum and over 2,000 in the American Numismatic Society (hereinafter ANS). Combining these tokens with other sources, British numismatic experts have identified over 9,000 different private token types, nearly all of them from the City of London, thirty-seven English counties, and the Irish Pale. They have been carefully catalogued (with illustrations) in an eight-volume *Sylloge*, published over almost thirty years under a single primary editor in a series sponsored by the British Museum.¹

For different reasons, this superb and unique resource has been ignored by both historians and economists. Historians do so because it ignores the chronology of its contents; economists, because the coins were not made by sovereign states. Sargent and Velde's account of preindustrial Europe's difficulties in making

William Monter is Professor Emeritus of History at Northwestern University. He is the author of *The Rise of Female Kings in Europe, 1300–1800* (New Haven, 2012); "Gendered Sovereignty: Numismatics and Female Monarchs in Europe, 1300–1800," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XLI (2011), 533–564.

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1 R. H. Thompson and M. J. Dickinson (eds.), *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* (London, 1984–2011), 8 v. (hereinafter *Sylloge*). Issuers making more than one numismatic token type receive multiple entries.

what we call “small change” blandly labels Great Britain’s prolonged failure to do so, either as a Commonwealth or a monarchy, as “a laissez-faire regime ... from 1644 to 1672” and explains that “suppliers were city councils, owners of firms, and local retailers.” However, their account reverses the numerical frequency of token makers; municipalities made fewer than 5 percent of England’s known coin token types.²

Sorting into chronological order the *Anno Domini* dates that appear frequently throughout this massive collection of private ersatz coins enables us to illuminate both continuities and changes among those who issued them during a tumultuous quarter-century of English history, which begins at the apex of its most radical political revolution and includes not only two major regime changes (Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate and Charles II’s Restoration), but also England’s final encounter with bubonic plague in 1665 and London’s Great Fire in the summer of 1666.

Two special minorities making predominantly dated coin tokens—eighty local English communities and over 270 Englishwomen—suggest that many of the former (including both the very earliest and the last) were earmarked for supporting their “deserving poor” and how the latter both resemble and differ from those of their male contemporaries. Even the mostly undated tokens from England’s commercial center illustrate how its competing businesses—especially taverns—advertised. Both dated and undated tokens from English retailers of tobacco and coffee, two increasingly popular exotic imports during this time, demonstrate their very different pricing and geographical locations.

Why did England, unlike anywhere else in Europe, make thousands upon thousands of low-value metallic ersatz coins over such a long time? Extremely reluctant to use so-called “base” metals on its royal coins, the country began making small change later than other major European states. Farthings, England’s smallest denomination (one-fourth of a penny), first circulated under James I, who, being fond of monopolies, licensed their manufacture from copper alloys in 1613. Abundant holdings of early Stuart farthings in the British Museum demonstrate that they quickly

2 Thomas J. Sargent and François R. Velde, *The Big Problem of Small Change* (Princeton, 2002), 266–267. Davies’ standard history of money devotes only one paragraph to this phenomenon, similarly prioritizing municipal issuers over private businesses. Glyn Davies, *A History of Money from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Cardiff, 2002, 3rd ed. rev.), 210.

became commonplace as the wealth and trade of their new composite Kingdom of Great Britain increased through its neutrality during the Thirty Years' War. However, during its civil war against Charles I, England's Parliament, alleging many serious abuses, abolished the royal farthing monopoly in 1644.³

A few years later, with the king beheaded and Parliament controlling the production of currency, the state mint called in all royal coins and issued new coins for the Commonwealth of England and Ireland. Like their royalist predecessors, revolutionary Puritans avoided making official coins from so-called "base" metal, so their Commonwealth struck no farthings. But with much of England's population already accustomed to using copper farthings, public demand for them soon generated private suppliers. As Sargent and Velde note, a black market of privately made farthings already flourished; counterfeits held in the collections of the British Museum more than doubled per annum between James I and Charles I. But with royal government now eliminated, there were no legal farthings to counterfeit. Instead, the most practical solution now was to make private copper-alloy farthing tokens of approximately the same size, shape, and weight as royal farthings. Dated versions of them spread quickly through most of the new Commonwealth and reached Dublin by 1654. However, they were unknown in Scotland, which had long made its own low-value copper coins, and such coins remained extremely rare in England's far north.⁴

Like the coins of the new Commonwealth, the writing on these private tokens is entirely in English. And because all Commonwealth coins containing words (those above twopence) also carry A.D. dates, some private farthing tokens soon imitated this custom to make themselves look more official. This practice intensified when somewhat larger private tokens began to carry higher exchange values; as a result, England's private halfpenny tokens carry dates far more often than its private farthings.

3 The British Museum (hereinafter BM) holds 143 farthings from James I's final 12 years and 374 from the following 19 years under Charles I.

4 Sargent and Velde, *Small Change*, 267. The BM has 18 counterfeit farthings from James I and 62 from Charles I. The two counties bordering Scotland produced only ten token types between them, none dated before 1659 and all but two from Newcastle on Northumberland's southern border (*Sylloge*, I, 574–575, IV, 3486–3493).

Because the restored royal government paid little attention to monetary shortages that primarily affected politically unimportant subjects, no royal farthings were struck until the reign of Charles II (1660–1685) was almost half over. In fact, shortages of low-end English coins worsened after the Restoration, when the Commonwealth’s tiny silver halfpence were demonetized but not replaced. Consequently, far more dated private coin tokens were made in the decade after the Restoration than in the republican 1650s—and most of those dated after 1665 carried higher exchange values, including a few private pennies. A comprehensive English coinage reform was finally enacted in 1672 during a suspension of royal payments known as the Stop of the Exchequer.

DATING ENGLISH PRIVATE TOKENS: A GLASS HALF FULL The *Sylloge* arranges Great Britain’s private coin tokens geographically by English counties but makes no attempt to arrange them chronologically because so many tokens, especially almost 1,500 farthing types from metropolitan London, lack dates. Nevertheless, the *Sylloge* also shows that, like every Commonwealth coin above twopence, some private coin tokens soon added an *Anno Domini* date. The earliest of these, often made for private clients by employees of the old royal mint, use the year 1648. Table 1 shows how often *Anno Domini* dates appear among the *Sylloge*’s 9,000 English token types, two-thirds of which were issued outside metropolitan London.⁵

Overall, England’s dated coin tokens total slightly over 4,500 types—almost exactly half of all English types in the *Sylloge*. Although its undated half cannot be distributed chronologically, its dated half provides sufficient evidence for understanding the chronology of the entire *Sylloge*. These annual totals also correlate well with the sizable sample of English tokens held by the ANS (currently near 2,300, including duplicates). About 58 percent of its

5 Thompson, “Mechanization at the 17th-Century London Mint: The Testimony of Tokens,” in Marion M. Archibald and Michael R. Cowell (eds.), *Metallurgy in Numismatics* (London, 1993, 3rd ed. rev.), 143–153. The earliest dated farthings in the *Sylloge* are VII, 6493–6494, 6726, 6809, 7124–7125, 7523–7524, VIII, 8530–8531, V, 4886. Because 1648 legally lasted until Easter 1649, it is possible, though unlikely, that no dated private farthing tokens precede Charles I’s execution in January 1649 (my thanks to Dror Goldberg for this suggestion). The BM’s thousands of Norweb Collection coin tokens included only a “tiny minority, surely fewer than 10%” containing A.D. dates. Barrie Cook, email to the author, December 5, 2022.

Table 1 Dated English Coin Token Types, 1648–1672

| YEAR | LONDON | ENGLAND | MUNICIPAL | TOTAL |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1648 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 1649 | 30 | 8 | 0 | 38 |
| 1650 | 22 | 21 | 0 | 43 |
| 1651 | 35 | 57 | 2 | 94 |
| 1652 | 31 | 114 | 63 | 208 |
| 1653 | 25 | 75 | 0 | 100 |
| 1654 | 8 | 43 | 0 | 51 |
| 1655 | 16 | 66 | 0 | 82 |
| 1656 | 35 | 138 | 0 | 173 |
| 1657 | 72 | 155 | 25 | 252 |
| 1658 | 42 | 104 | 1 | 147 |
| 1659 | 44 | 89 | 3 | 137 |
| 1660 | 5 | 38 | 7 | 50 |
| 1661 | 9 | 17 | 0 | 26 |
| 1662 | 17 | 35 | 72 | 124 |
| 1663 | 30 | 84 | 0 | 114 |
| 1664 | 73 | 176 | 2 | 251 |
| 1665 | 32 | 78 | 1 | 111 |
| 1666 | 210 | 465 | 11 | 686 |
| 1667 | 171 | 404 | 43 | 618 |
| 1668 | 120 | 413 | 27 | 560 |
| 1669 | 67 | 305 | 70 | 432 |
| 1670 | 13 | 118 | 29 | 160 |
| 1671 | 7 | 53 | 2 | 62 |
| 1672 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 9 |

SOURCE *Sylloge*.

1,471 farthings carry dates, with annual averages of 37.5 percent in the 1650s and 41.5 percent in the 1660s. Only 75 percent of its 660 halfpence carry dates, but 89 percent of those dates come after 1665. Both the *Sylloge* and the ANS sample share the same peak years for dated farthings (1652, 1657, 1664, and especially 1666–1668) and the same sharp drops (1654, 1660/1, 1665, and 1670).⁶

A few major conclusions emerge from these numbers. First, metropolitan London's 2,982 private token types make up roughly one-third of the *Sylloge*'s total and display very different patterns of A.D. dating from those elsewhere in England. This difference is due

6 Unlike items in the *Sylloge*, the dated ANS sample can be searched by years through its Mantis program, available at <https://numismatics.org/search/>. Because these coin tokens were made by machines, they are in Mantis' "Modern" section.

primarily to metropolitan London's preference for leaving its private tokens undated, which increased after Charles II's restoration in 1660. Farthings comprise two-thirds of London's total (1,958), but only 510 of these (under 28 percent) carry dates. Although annual averages of dated farthings issued beyond London increased after 1660 (peaking in 1666), about 70 percent of London's dated farthings precede the Restoration. As we shall see, many of London's undated farthings were probably issued in the later 1660s, when almost no London farthings carry dates.

Another major conclusion is that the *Sylloge's* 4,500 dated tokens are remarkably unevenly distributed chronologically—over half of them (2,289) come during four consecutive years, 1666–1669. One might reasonably expect a sudden surge in 1666 as England recovered from the commercial disruption caused by its final attack of bubonic plague in 1665, but this recovery cannot begin to explain a sixfold year-on-year increase. It is rather more likely that most of this increase was due instead to the enormous stimulus of rebuilding the mile-square City of London almost immediately after it had been gutted by the Great Fire in the summer of 1666.

A third conclusion is that England's "dated token boom" of 1666–1669 coincided with a sharp increase in the average exchange value of its private tokens (Table 1 combines their exchange values). By 1666, England's dated coin tokens included more halfpence than farthings, and halfpence were far likelier than farthings to carry dates. Issuers beyond London dated over 80 percent (1,336 of 1,644) of their halfpenny types, and exactly 90 percent of these dates come after 1665. Only 585 of metropolitan London's 1,078 halfpenny types carry dates, but almost 90 percent of them also come after 1665. By 1666, we even find England's first dated private penny tokens.

A closer look at this chronology suggests that although English political events impacted the practice of dating private English coin tokens less than such natural disasters as plague or fire, they were significant. It is not coincidental that dated tokens began in the Puritan stronghold of London during the apex of England's greatest revolution. The *Sylloge* identifies forty different London farthing types dated in the two years around Europe's first public execution of a hereditary monarch; over half (twenty-two) come from the City, eleven from Middlesex, and seven from South Bank.

Dated farthings spread beyond London very quickly. In 1649, we find three issuers in Kent and others in Hertfordshire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire. By 1650, we find as many dated farthing types outside London as inside it. By 1651, London issued only 37 percent of England's dated farthings, which now included two from urban parishes and three from women, none of either in London. Metropolitan London never again in the republican 1650s produced even one-third of England's dated farthings, and its share dropped further under Charles II.⁷

The *Sylloge* also shows that major political changes adversely affected dated farthings, which fell abruptly throughout England in expectation that Cromwell's Protectorate, which began in 1654, would prohibit them. But when the Protector only made new high-value silver coins, England's annual totals of dated farthings recovered rapidly, peaking three years later when Cromwell's Protectorate seemed stable and successful (the City, which made forty-four of London's seventy-two dated farthings in 1657, never again dated half as many).

If Cromwell's *coup d'état* inhibited putting A.D. dates on private farthings, Charles II's restoration in 1660 provoked even greater expectations that the new king would restore his father's farthing monopoly. The drop in dated farthings throughout England therefore became even sharper and more prolonged—1661 was considerably worse than 1660. When the restored royal government made none of England's smallest circulating coins, businesses throughout England soon resumed making dated farthings and added a few halfpenny tokens. By 1664, England's dated tokens matched their Cromwellian peak in 1657—but only because London businesses now made thirty-one dated halfpence alongside forty-two dated farthings. Next year, however, was extremely bleak because of England's final assault from bubonic plague; dated tokens fell by more than half in 1665, but London's dated halfpence outnumbered its dated farthings by thirty-three to thirteen.

As the plague abated early the following year, one might expect England's dated private coin tokens to regain their levels of 1664. Instead, they surged dramatically, far beyond any previous annual total, to reach their overall peak of 686. Moreover, in 1666,

7 *Sylloge*, III, 2499, 2510, 2642, V, 2306–2307, 5421, VI, 5678–5679.

dated halfpence outnumbered dated farthings throughout England, because London's dated halfpence outnumbered its dated farthings by 174 to 36 in the aftermath of that summer's Great Fire. Full-throttle reconstruction in the City of London probably peaked in 1667, which became the second most productive year for England's dated private tokens and the first when dated halfpence also outnumbered dated farthings beyond London. England's annual totals remained extremely high over the next two years as rebuilding continued in central London, then fell abruptly in 1670 and even further in 1671, when a few prominent issuers of municipal and private monetary tokens were prosecuted for infringing the long-defunct royal farthing monopoly.⁸

MUNICIPAL ENGLISH COIN TOKENS England's successive central governments made no farthings and inadequate numbers of halfpence, and its municipalities and lesser collective polities did little to meet this need. The *Sylloge* identifies nearly 400 municipal token types (under 5 percent of its total) from eighty towns scattered across two dozen English counties and one town in Ireland, which began carrying dates four years after private tokens. However, almost 88 percent of England's municipal token types are dated, and municipal records tell us that about half of the rest were made during the late 1660s. Alongside dozens of obscure villages, tokens come from several eponymous county seats (Oxford, Gloucester, Hereford, Northampton, Nottingham, Worcester) and several places with famous cathedrals (Peterborough, Salisbury, Norwich, Winchester, Bath, Wells, Lincoln), although not from either English archbishopric, neither Canterbury nor York.⁹

At the same time, almost none of the municipal tokens came from England's most important token-issuing regions. Among metropolitan London's 3,000 token types are only two municipal tokens, both dated 1653, one from Bridewell Hospital proclaiming, "Worke for the Poore," and the other from the Overseers of the Poor in Wapping. Similarly, the three English counties with the largest numbers of preserved token types in the *Sylloge* (Kent, Yorkshire, and Essex) produced only two late municipal tokens,

8 John Craig, *The Mint: A History of the London Mint from A.D. 287 to 1948* (Cambridge, 1948), 173.

9 Similarly, communities in five counties produced only 3% of the 620 undated farthings in the ANS.

from the great Channel port of Dover in 1668 and an obscure Yorkshire market town, Bridlington, in 1670.¹⁰

Over one-third of England's municipal token types in the *Sylloge* came from the monetarily quasi-autonomous port of Bristol, the only English city with a plausible claim to make its own farthings despite the royal monopoly. Its three earliest farthing types (made in 1651) lack dates; but in the following year, Bristol issued fifty dated farthing types, which account for almost all of England's earliest dated municipal tokens. A decade later, Bristol issued seventy dated farthing types, which comprise most of England's dated coin tokens in 1662. Their quasi-legality also gave Bristol farthings an unusually wide circulation; a few counterfeits (always the best evidence of prestige) survive, and authentic Bristol farthings have been found as far apart as Wales and London. But although Bristol issued almost three-fourths of England's dated municipal tokens until 1666 (129 of 172), it became insignificant during England's "municipal dated token boom" of 1667–1670 when it made only 6 percent of them (10 of 179).¹¹

England's earliest dated public farthings came from parishes in Exeter and Salisbury in 1651; like those from Wapping in 1653, they were intended for local beggars (one urged, "Drink yee all of this," another admonished, "If thou believist"). In 1652, Oxford also issued dated municipal farthings—but unlike Bristol's, they circulated alongside local dated private tokens. The following year, another county seat, Northampton, issued undated farthings.¹²

During Cromwell's Protectorate, municipal farthings disappear until 1657, when the market town of Newbury in Berkshire issued fifteen types, Gloucester (Bristol's county seat) made several with the mayor's name, and others appear as far north as Stamford in Lincolnshire. In the Commonwealth's final years, Andover in Hampshire made England's first explicitly charitable municipal farthings, which depict a disabled person and urge users to "Remember the Poor," while other farthings came from cathedral towns (Salisbury, Bath, and Wells). A few now carry higher exchange values; Northampton made halfpence in 1657 and

10 *Sylloge*, VII, 7783, VIII, 8248, IV, 2505–2507, VI, 5817–5818.

11 The excellent survey by Thompson notes that "only five private tokens, all rare, survive from England's second or third-largest city." Thompson, "Bristol Farthings, 1651–70," in *Sylloge*, II, xxxii.

12 *Sylloge*, I, 707, VI, 5588, VIII, 9369, IV, 3665–3675, 3775, 3764, 3740, 3399.

1660, while in Ireland, Cork issued England's only dated municipal pennies in 1659. At the Restoration, Bristol, with its peculiar privilege of making its own farthings, made England's only dated municipal farthings.¹³

Soon afterward, Bristol issued England's largest-ever cluster of dated municipal farthings, which comprise over two-thirds of England's dated coin tokens in 1652, and another county seat, Hereford, made dated halfpence. Otherwise, however, municipal coin tokens remained extremely rare in the early Restoration. In 1664, they came from two very distant places—Newport on the Isle of Wight issued dated halfpence, and in far northwestern Cumberland, private farthings from “A.B.” proclaim that “I am for the publique good in Cockermouth.” During the plague year, only one Shropshire market town made dated halfpence. In 1666—the peak year for dated private tokens throughout England—municipal tokens still comprise fewer than 2 percent of them, all from earlier issuers in Andover or familiar counties like Somerset.¹⁴

England's “great token boom” finally reached its communities in 1667, when the *Sylloge* includes municipal tokens from seventeen different counties, and it lasted until 1670. It peaked in 1669, when the *Sylloge* lists twenty municipalities making farthings, twelve making halfpence, and six making both. Yet, although England's dated private tokens now included more halfpence than farthings, its final clusters of dated municipal tokens reverse these ratios. Our most extreme example comes from the three main towns in Norfolk (Norfolk, Yarmouth, and King's Lynn), which issued fifty-two dated municipal token types, all farthings, from 1667 to 1670. In 1670, eleven communities in eight counties issued dated tokens. Only three villages in Devon and a cathedral town, Peterborough, made halfpence, while most of its municipal farthings came from England's largest provincial cities, Bristol and Norwich. The next year, when John Garrill prosecuted seven towns for infringing the long-defunct royal farthing monopoly of 1613, municipal tokens almost disappear.¹⁵

13 *Sylloge*, I, 106–120, II, 1649–1660 (like Bristol, Gloucester again made dated farthings under Charles II), III, 2987. See also *Sylloge*, II, 622–623, 1896–1899, III, 1801, 2987, I, 622–623, IV, 3400–3403, 3947, 4157–4159, VI, 5535–5538, 6202–6212.

14 *Sylloge*, I, 574, III, 2051–2052, IV, 3975–3980, 3881, 4153–4154.

15 *Sylloge*, IV, 3064–3070, 3108–3126, 3273–3298. (The ANS similarly peaks in 1669, with 43 dated farthings and 16 dated halfpence from 22 communities). See also *Sylloge*, II, 609, 623, 734–735, 1585–1594.

This final cycle includes several dated municipal tokens earmarked for the local “deserving poor.” As under Cromwell, these begin at Andover in 1666 and end five years later in Lincolnshire, where Louth’s Overseers of the Poor made halfpenny tokens to give to its poor. In between, our most eloquent example comes from Dover, whose 1668 halfpenny tokens “For the Poor of Dover” depict beggars portrayed with St. Martin.¹⁶

These local “deserving poor” were often disproportionately female, and a few municipal tokens, like those dated 1669 from the Overseers of Poor Women in St. Ives in Huntingdonshire, even depict them doing washing. A more highly skilled but equally female and similarly poorly-paid profession appears on the undated halfpence (surely also from the late 1660s) from the Overseers of nearby St. Neots, which depicts two seated women making lace.¹⁷

WOMEN’S COIN TOKENS Overall, the *Sylloge* includes at least 280 English private coin token types from women from thirty-five English counties. If we set aside the special case of Bristol’s farthings, women issued more coin token types than municipalities, across more counties, and with higher face values. Moreover, they began dating them slightly earlier; by the time Bristol and Oxford issued dated farthings, a woman at Leeds in Yorkshire had issued some dated 1650, followed the next year by other women in Kent and Warwickshire.¹⁸

English women put A.D. dates on their personal coin tokens more often than men did, both in metropolitan London (where over 40 percent of token-issuing women resided) and beyond. As with men, these ratios were higher outside of London, where women dated 60 percent (fifty-eight of ninety-seven) of their farthings and 85 percent (fifty-four of sixty-three) of their halfpence. Although metropolitan London’s businessmen dated barely one-fourth of their farthings and barely half of their halfpence, its businesswomen dated half (twenty-eight of fifty-five)

16 *Sylloge*, III, 1892–1905, 2505–2507, 2971. As municipal tokens peaked in 1669–1670, several from England’s smaller communities explain that they were “For ye Benefit of ye Poor.”

17 *Sylloge*, III, 2336–2337, 2351.

18 See note 6. Farthings dated to 1651 from Alice Cobham (*Sylloge*, III, 2901–2903) and Margaret Yarnoll (*Sylloge*, V, 5277).

of their farthings and almost three-fourths (forty-three of fifty-nine) of their halfpence. Dated women's tokens from London also illustrate the political contrast between the City as a Commonwealth stronghold in the 1650s and Westminster as a royalist magnet after 1660. Farthings dated 1652 from women in both the City and the South Bank precede any dated from urban Middlesex by five years; but under Charles II, women made dated halfpence both earlier (1663) and more often in urban Middlesex than in the City.¹⁹

Two criteria—making two token types and making penny tokens—help us identify some of the leading businesswomen in the *Sylloge*. Eight women (three of them in London) issued two token types. Three women (a grocer in Norfolk, a mercer in Warwickshire, and Elizabeth Hoare in South Bank) issued dated farthings during Cromwell's Protectorate and again under Charles II, while Alice Onley (who ran the Bull's Head in central London) issued dated farthings under Cromwell and dated pennies under Charles II; in between, a woman in Northamptonshire dated both farthings and halfpence in 1660. Two women in or near London issued both dated farthings and dated halfpence in the 1660s, and Amy Sutton (who ran the Wiltshire Shepherd in Westminster) issued both undated farthings and undated halfpence.²⁰

Unsurprisingly, four of the five Englishwomen issuing private pennies between 1666 and prohibition came from the City of London (the other came from Yorkshire, from a widow). One dated 1672 advertised a turbaned Turk and probably came from a coffeehouse. Two others, including the only undated woman's penny (from Alice Pascal, who owned The Queen's Head), came from London's female tavern owners.²¹

Although we know little about the occupations of these 272 women making tokens, we can find a few of them sprinkled among every major token-issuing business throughout England (taverns, grocers, chandlers, mercers, bakers) and in other occupations (cooper, stationer, pewterer, apothecary, ironmonger, pinner,

19 Compare *Sylloge*, VII, 6869 and V, 4841 with VIII, 8697.

20 *Sylloge*, I, 158, 755, III, 1400, 2464, 2880, 2961, IV, 3157, 3732, V, 4271, 5204, 5277, 5281, 5375, VI, 6164–6165, VII, 6476, 6515, 6724, 6979, 7617–7618, 7668, V, 4840–4841, VIII, 8772, 8835, 8273–8275, 7941, 8899.

21 *Sylloge*, IV, 3057–3059, 3391–3393, V, 4542–4544, 4570–4571, 5078–5079, VI, 6070, VII, 6730, 7190–7191, 7274, 7338, VIII, 9255–9257, 9463, 9469.

bookseller, dyer). Those in metropolitan London include two salters, chandlers, shoemakers, and milliners alongside a cheesemonger, merchant tailor, brewer, haberdasher, and even a shipwright in South Bank. But it is certain that tavern owners were by far the most important occupation among London women issuing tokens—and, unlike most other London women’s coin tokens, two-thirds of these twenty-one token types were undated.²²

WHICH BUSINESSES MADE COIN TOKENS? The indexes of the *Sylloge*’s final two volumes identify every known occupation found on the over 2,500 token types from England’s commercial and political heart in the City of London and urban Middlesex (where Westminster supplied almost 40 percent of its 1,200 types). The leading categories were identical in both areas: the City had seventy-six different vintners issuing tokens and Middlesex had thirty-four, followed by fifty grocers in the City and twenty-eight in Middlesex. Behind them came various kinds of candle-makers: forty-four “chandlers” in the City and twenty-two in Middlesex. Elsewhere, the City predominated by thirty one to six among London’s coffeehouses (examined in the next section), and Middlesex outnumbered the City nine to three among coin tokens from “gentlemen.”²³

The *Sylloge* also separates tokens where the name of the business rather than its owner dominates the front—a method that was extremely frequent in central London, where about 44 percent of token types in the City and 37.5 percent of those in urban Middlesex advertised this way. But this share drops to barely one-fourth (117 of 437) in urban South Bank and falls below 10 percent (21 to 220) immediately beyond in rural Surrey and almost everywhere else in England. Although most names of businesses are not

22 *Sylloge*, I, 61, 76, 150, 158, 513, 755, II, 938, 1364, III, 1880, 1900, 2153, 2184, 2464, 2514, 2643, 2701–2703, 2839–2840, 2880, 2961, IV, 3034–3035, 3052–3059, 3080, 3157, 3176–3177, 3339, 3370, 3625, 3629, 3818, 3826, V, 4432, 4455, 4505, 4693–4694, VI, 5873, 5888, 5964, 6016, 6164–6165, 6166. *Sylloge*, V, 4840–4841, 5038, VII, 6476, 6515, 6724, 6979, 7617–7618, 7668, VIII, 7941, 8273–8275, 8772, 8835, 8899. Half of the dozen larger and higher-value tavern tokens from London women carry dates from 1664–1669, but none of their nine farthings (*Sylloge*, VII, 6820, 6903, 7154, 7190, 7413, 7673, VIII, 7993, 9049, 9463) is dated after 1657.

23 *Sylloge*, VII, 355–361 VIII, 410–416. Middlesex also outnumbered the City 27 to 17 among “mealmen” and 22 to 14 among bakers. All four “captains” issuing tokens lived in the City while all four “mariners” operating ferries lived in Middlesex.

transparent, it seems obvious that both in London and elsewhere a great many of these named businesses sold food and drink.

Significantly, the practice of naming the business on the token's front maps almost perfectly onto England's earliest dated farthings, when all but one came from London's taverns (five in the City, one in urban Middlesex, and another in South Bank). In 1649, a few grocers made dated farthings, but taverns (including a few sharing the same name) remained predominant, with three taverns and a grocer in South Bank and four taverns, two grocers, and a haberdasher in Middlesex. All of the earliest farthings from groceries spell the owner's name fully, but only one owner of a London tavern did so.²⁴

Throughout the entire period, competition among London's numerous taverns generated some memorable names on their mostly undated tokens. A few commemorated imaginary English heroes like Robin Hood, Jack of Newbury, Guy of Warwick, or even Whittington's cat, while others commemorated such real but distant figures as Henry VIII's favorite jester. Closer to Parliament, the Virginia (1654 farthing) and the New England (1667 halfpence) celebrated England's successful settler colonies in North America. Some tokens seem today blatantly sexist, racist, or occasionally both. An undated farthing from The Labor in Vayne depicts two European women washing an African, while the Blak Boy's arrow-carrying halfpenny token of 1669 copies the coat of arms of the recently chartered Royal Africa Company that monopolized the English slave trade.²⁵

24 See note 5 on 1648 tokens. Ten of the earliest two dozen dated farthings in the ANS come from taverns (one in Gloucester) and four from grocers, two of them in Kent. See ANS 1966.252.139 (*Sylloge*, II, 1676) and ANS 1951.194.18, 1970.235.112 (*Sylloge*, VII, 6925); see also *Sylloge*, VII, 7222–7223, 6764, 6470, 7064–7066, 7124–7125, 7523–7524, 7622, 7810. *Sylloge* tokens from taverns dated 1649 or 1650 include two in the City with the same name (*At the Cok*) but located on different streets; another pairs the City's Ship in Fleete Lane with the Ship Without in Temple Bar; while the Lamb lay very close indeed to the Lion along the same street. See *Sylloge*, VII, 6427–6428, 6961, 7701, 6945, V, 4848, 4861–4863, 4873, 5074–5075, VIII, 8354, 8409–8410, 8471, 8182, 9377, 9015–9016, 8839, 8841. An abundance of paid-off sailors helps to explain why a 1650 farthing from Westminster's Mermaid tavern coexists with four identically-named City taverns making farthing tokens in 1650 or 1651 (*Sylloge*, VII, 6557, 6434, 6766, VIII, 8820, 9039–9040).

25 See *Sylloge*, VII, 6558, 7000, 7221, 7239–7240, 7453, 6551, VIII, 7881, 8039, 8113, 8167, 8222, 8797. An ANS farthing from Whittington's Cat in Long Lane (1951.194.196) cannot be found in the *Sylloge*.

During the 1660s, London's taverns' best-known client was the rising naval bureaucrat and man-about-town Samuel Pepys, whose famous diaries mention over 150 taverns. Many of them probably never issued monetary tokens, although many others did—but remain hard to locate precisely, because most had homonyms. For example, in the early 1660s Pepys often ate at two almost identically-named Westminster restaurants. Clerke's Leg in King Street, where Pepys dined frequently, never issued tokens; but the Legg in New Palace Yard, where he dined occasionally, issued undated farthings. No tavern mentioned often by Pepys ever issued a dated coin token, although after the Great Fire, the Hercules Pillars, his favorite dining spot, issued both undated farthings and undated halfpence, and the Three Tuns, where he attended parish dinners in those years, also issued undated halfpence.²⁶

Outside London, barely one-seventh (175 of 1,250) of the tokens in the *Sylloge's* first two volumes specify their issuer's occupation. The most common trades met everyday needs: thirty-eight mercers selling general merchandise, thirty grocers, sixteen bakers, fourteen "chandlers" making candles, followed by over three dozen other occupations issuing sixty-eight tokens. However, these totals omit any tokens naming the business rather than the owner, which (as in London) come mostly from taverns. Overall, five major occupations—grocers, taverns, candle-makers, mercers, bakers—persist among the mostly dated ANS tokens from outside London throughout both the republican and monarchical eras, with a greater variety of occupations in the later 1660s (its ninety halfpenny tokens dated 1668 represent twenty different trades, including a bookbinder from Shakespeare's home town).²⁷

Tokens from London's 1666–1669 boom also include such unusual occupations as two bodice-makers. A few others offer well-made visual aids; Thomas Munden, a bricklayer and a chart-maker, issued a halfpence in 1666 with a beautifully drawn

26 Complete list in Pepys, *Diary*, XI, 279–283; compare *Sylloge*, VIII, 8842, VII, 7072–7073, 6847, 6907, 7023, 7809. Before the Fire, such Pepys favorites as the Mitre on Fenchurch Street and the Harp near Charing Cross, where he engaged in flirtations, issued undated farthings (*Sylloge*, VII, 7061–7063, 7089–7090), as did other taverns that Pepys visited only occasionally.

27 *Sylloge*, II, 148–149; ANS 1965.332.99 (*Sylloge*, II, 1362) and 1963.24.160 (*Sylloge*, V, 5369).

map on front, and a truss-maker issued undated pennies that advertised his product held by a naked boy.²⁸

POPULAR VS. FASHIONABLE IMPORTS: TOBACCO AND COFFEE England's private monetary tokens also illustrate the sharply contrasting histories of retailers selling England's most rapidly increasing exotic imports during these years: tobacco became plebeian while coffee became elitist. Before 1600, both were barely known in England. But in this era, tobacco imports from the American colonies increased dramatically in quantity and fell sharply in price just as private monetary tokens began circulating in the 1650s; coffee, imported exclusively from the Ottoman Empire, remained relatively expensive. Like its neighboring Protestant power in the Netherlands, England debated tobacco's risks and benefits while its consumption through clay pipes increased relentlessly.²⁹

Goodman and Cowan suggest that these products—but not other exotic imports like tea—were successfully marketed to mid-seventeenth-century English consumers primarily to improve their consumer's health. Tobacco in particular was widely presented as a panacea for many different illnesses, even promising immunity from catching the 1665 plague (when even Pepys chewed some). Coffee promised fewer medical benefits, but it was non-intoxicating and thus far safer than alcohol to consume in public; this social utility quickly attracted upscale customers like Pepys, who visited several "Coffee Houses" including two issuing undated halfpenny tokens.³⁰

Monetary tokens from both tobacco and coffee retailers are most easily traced through two distinctive motifs for each group. Tobacconists usually display one or more specially cut tobacco rolls; a minority display crossed pairs of long-stemmed clay pipes (the most original, from a London tobacconist, shows a Native

28 *Sylloge*, VII, 6511, 7755, 7818, 8966, VIII, 9104, 9008.

29 Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (London, 1993), 59–70. Compare the sketch of "Europe's first tobacco connoisseurs" in Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York, 1987), 195–215; and compare Pepys, *Diary*, XI, 62–63 with *Sylloge*, VIII, 8018–8019, VII, 7615.

30 Compare Goodman, *Tobacco*, 37–55, with Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, 2005), 31–54. Compare Pepys, *Diary*, II, 128, VI, 120 with *Sylloge*, VIII, 8018–8019 VII, 7615.

American holding a pipe). Similarly, tokens from coffee retailers mostly prefer a turbaned Turk's head, but sometimes display distinctively shaped coffeepots. Although London's coffeehouse pennies occasionally mention tobacco, and a 1669 halfpence from a coffeehouse in York also depicts tobacco pipes, no tobacconist tokens mention coffee.³¹

The *Sylloge* illustrates the growth of smoking cheap tobacco across much of England through token types showing tobacco rolls or pipes from eighteen English counties. Most were farthings: a Wiltshire tobacconist issued three dated farthings (1656, 1664, 1668); another nearby and one in England's smallest county, Rutland, issued three different undated farthings. The ANS has fourteen dated tobacconist tokens from eleven English counties during the 1660s, ranking immediately behind dated tokens from such essential local businesses as candlemakers, mercers, and bakers.³²

Dated coffeehouse tokens begin a full decade later than those advertising tobacco products and differ sharply both in their average exchange values (they are the only English trade in the *Sylloge* whose thirty or more tokens include only one farthing) and their relative concentration in the City of London, where tobacconists remained rare. Elsewhere in north London, tokens from coffeehouses and tobacconists (including the differently owned 3 Tobacco Rolls and 3 Tobacco Pipes) seem about equal to one another and occasionally close together.³³

FROM PRIVATE PENNIES TO PUBLIC SMALL CHANGE The English government's failure to produce its own low-end coins lasted until its governing elite finally realized that several private pennies were

31 For Native American with pipes, see *Sylloge*, VII, 7438. "Morat ye Great" advertised tobacco immediately after coffee, another coffee house included small images of tobacco rolls and pipes, and a large octagonal token depicts tobacco pipes and a turbaned Turk on opposite sides. See Cowan, *Social Life*, 179; *Sylloge*, VIII, 9207, VII, 6736. For the York coffeehouse, see *Sylloge*, VI, 6122).

32 The *Sylloge's* largest cluster of mostly undated tobacco-themed farthings comes from businesses in London's South Bank called The Tobacco Roll, The 3 Tobacco Rolls, and The 3 Tobacco Pipes, plus two grocers and two taverns (one near the docks called Ye Virginny); two other tokens depict apes smoking pipes. *Sylloge* V, #5137–38, 4883–84, 4859, 4789, 5068, 5101, 5077, 5241 (apes smoking).

33 Locations of every London coffeeshop issuing coin tokens can be found in *Sylloge*, VII, 356, VIII, 411. Compare Middlesex tobacconists in *Sylloge*, VIII, 415. For neighboring coffeehouse and tobacconist, see *Sylloge*, VIII, 9449–9450.

circulating in its freshly rebuilt commercial center. The token boom of 1666–1669 coincided with the circulation of some considerably larger and heavier tokens, several of which specify that they represented a penny. Penny tokens remained unusual, comprising barely 1 percent of all English token types in the *Sylloge*. Almost half came from London, followed by Yorkshire (twenty-nine), Cheshire (twelve), Shropshire (nine), and four elsewhere. About half of London’s pennies remain undated; elsewhere, over 90 percent of them carry dates starting in 1666. London’s largest group of pennies came from its fashionable coffeehouses in the City, which outnumber even those from taverns; other London pennies advertise such occupations as truss-maker, girdler, gun-maker, and poulterer. Elsewhere, Chester’s issuers include two ironmongers, an apothecary, a haberdasher, and a confectioner (whose penny was heart-shaped); in Yorkshire, two pennies depict tobacco rolls or pipes and two others advertise coffeehouses.³⁴

Despite their relative rarity, the circulation of private pennies truly alarmed England’s central government, representing a serious danger to the stringently protected sovereign privilege of coining legitimate money. (Pennies remained the basic units of official English coinage from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century.)

Because coffeehouse tokens combined two serious faults—they were often pennies and those turbaned Turks were still Christendom’s most dangerous foes—they became the official scapegoats for prohibiting all coin tokens. The subsidized flysheet justifying the Privy Council’s 1672 prohibition of all private tokens celebrated the deserved death of “coffee pence,” adding half-pennies as an afterthought.³⁵

The Royal Mint used copper—the same “non-noble” metal as the prohibited private coins—to make England’s new low-end public farthings, halfpence, and pennies. As Henry Slingsby, its new Deputy Master in 1662, explained to Pepys in 1663, the mint

34 London coffeehouses issued at least sixteen penny tokens from fourteen locations, nine of them dated from 1667 (*Sylloge*, VII, 7158) to 1672 (*Sylloge*, VII, 6730); thirteen halfpence, four of them dated from 1663 (*Sylloge*, VII, 7164) to 1669 (*Sylloge*, VIII, 9450); and only one undated farthing (*Sylloge*, VII, 7757). Yorkshire’s two tobacco-themed pennies (*Sylloge*, VI, 5832, 5924) equal its coffeehouse pennies (*Sylloge*, VI, 5807, 5945). For the Chester confectioner’s heart-shaped pennies, see *Sylloge*, I, 504. The ANS has three undated pennies from the London truss-maker.

35 Thompson, “Contemporary References to Tokens, the Downfall of Coffee-Pence, and the *Sultaness*,” in *Sylloge*, VII, xii–xiv; Cowan, *Social Life*, 180.

could strike them on state-of-the-art coin presses long used in Paris (which Slingsby had just used to make new English silver coins from France's massive cash payment for returning Dunkirk). In 1667, Slingsby became Master of the Mint, but was not ordered to make copper farthings, halfpence, and pennies until five years later. To make them, Slingsby's French partner, Pierre Blondeau, imported the five coin presses to make English small change from Poland, the copper was imported from Sweden as ready-made perfectly round blanks of varying sizes, and the engraving was done by a Dutch immigrant. Slingsby had promised to make a net profit from a copper coinage of full metallic value, once manufacturing costs were deducted; after four years, his mint accounts showed a net profit of nearly 500 pounds sterling from a face value of 40,000 pounds sterling.³⁶ Mechanization, unlike James I's licensed monopoly, permitted a far more effective solution to an obvious public need.

This essay has used the *Anno Domini* dates found on roughly half of the 9,000 token types in the *Norweb Sylloge* to tease out some of their historical contexts, a task ignored by the disciplinary custodians of this remarkable and unique public resource. Although its subject matter functioned as low-end coins, it also seems well beyond the comfort zone of most economic historians, who usually define coinage as something made exclusively by sovereign states. Yet, only about 1 percent of English local public authorities ever issued any of these tokens; they came overwhelmingly from private businesses, primarily those catering to such basic needs as food, drink, clothing, and artificial light. These 4,500 dated token types, which begin at the apex of England's greatest political revolution, continued long after the Restoration and increased remarkably (in both raw numbers and exchange values) between 1666 and 1669. The coins have the potential to provide useful historical evidence about various aspects of their political, economic, and cultural contexts. More specifically, it is clear that the 1666–1669 boom of dated token types throughout England was caused primarily by the intensive and sustained rebuilding effort in the City of London, which began almost immediately after its Great Fire in

36 Craig, *The Mint*, 174–176; Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 266, V 269; Christopher E. Challis (ed.), *A New History of the Royal Mint* (Cambridge, 1992), 353–356, 365–369.

the summer of 1666. The reconstruction of England's commercial heart with fireproof exteriors has recently interested architects and engineers but deserves more attention from economic historians.³⁷

Another important problem with using this evidence concerns investigating how easily these ersatz coins from thousands of private businesses circulated beyond their own customers. We know that Bristol's quasi-legal farthings (nearly all issued before 1666) circulated in Wales and London, and that other municipal tokens circulated throughout the communities that issued them. However, a much greater problem is to locate evidence about how extensively London's undated farthing types circulated during central London's great rebuilding of the late 1660s—a time when London made almost no dated farthings and when England's only professional changer of farthings issued undated halfpence in Westminster with the number two on each side. Was the omission of *Anno Domini* dates intended to make London's private farthings more fungible?³⁸

We call these metallic artifacts *tokens* rather than *coins* only because they were issued by thousands of private individuals. Unlike counterfeiters, their issuers put their names (or at least their initials) and addresses, and sometimes advertised their business on them; several hundred proudly say “His [or occasionally “Her”] Half Penny” on the reverse. To many economists, they remain a black hole, but they offer a unique bonanza to historians.³⁹

37 The Crown pressed skilled workmen into service to rebuild the Custom House “for the publique trade of the City and consequently for the advantage of the whole body.” The effects reached far beyond London; as Defoe (then age six) recalled, “what a Trade this made over the whole Kingdom, to make good the Want and supply that Loss,” quoted in Rebecca Rideal, *1666: Plague, War, and Hellfire* (London, 2016), 221. In addition to the 2016 exhibit of unrealized plans at the Royal Institute of British Architects, see also Maria Zack, “Rebuilding Mathematically: A Study of the Rebuilding of London and Lisbon,” *Nexus Network Journal*, XVII (2015), 571–586.

38 *Sylloge*, VIII, 8767.

39 The 660 halfpence in the ANS include tokens from 19 women with this phrase; 16 carry dates between 1665 and 1669, with 3 from metropolitan London undated.