

THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TOKEN ISSUERS OF
GRAVESEND AND MILTON-NEXT-GRAVESEND

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THE term 'token' is commonly given to a class of coins struck by traders or official bodies without the authority of the government. They were, therefore, not legal currency, but were a 'money of necessity' without which local trading would have broken down when the government neglected its duty of striking coins of low value.

During two periods of our history, the first in the middle of the seventeenth century, and the second at the end of the eighteenth century, there was an acute shortage of small change as the National Mint issued very little lower than sixpence. Local bodies and tradesmen on their own initiative remedied this state of affairs by issuing their own pence, halfpence and farthings. Tokens first began to be issued in 1649, and during the Commonwealth period no copper coinage was officially issued. In 1672, regal copper coinage was restarted under Charles II, and the Royal Proclamation of 16th August, 1672, announcing the new currency ordered the withdrawal of the tokens.

Very few of these seventeenth-century tokens have any artistic merit; in nearly all cases the designs are simple and poorly struck, and the spelling sometimes eccentric and inconstant. All the Gravesend and Milton ones are of brass or bronze, although lead was sometimes used in other parts of the country. The inscriptions on traders' tokens usually consist of the Christian name and surname of the issuer, his vocation and the town or village where he lived. In addition, we often have the initials of the issuer and his wife, the value and a device. These designs are the arms of his trading fraternity or guild, shop or tavern sign, his family arms, or a device indicating his trade.

Many tokens are dated and much information about the issuers can often be gleaned from them. They are very useful to local historians as an aid to building up a picture of local conditions of life in the seventeenth century. As a rule they did not travel very far afield, for it was only the issuer who was bound to honour them. Evelyn, the diarist of the period, wrote, "The "Tokens" which every tavern and tippling house (in the days of the late anarchy among us) presum'd to stamp and utter for immediate exchange, as they were passable through the neighbourhood, which, tho' seldom reaching farther than the next street or two, may happily in after times come to exercise and busie

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the learned critic what they should signify and fill whole volumes with their conjectures.¹

Despite the importance of the parishes of Gravesend and Milton-next-Gravesend, now known collectively as Gravesend, as evidenced by the number of tokens issued, it is unfortunate that very little trace of the issuers' descendants remains after the period covered by the tokens, a fact noted by R. P. Cruden in 1843 in his history of Gravesend.² Complete reliance upon the fragmentary contemporary records is, therefore, a necessity in most instances in checking topographical or other relevant details, and any information thus obtained is of the utmost value.

The seventeenth-century tokens of Gravesend and Milton are clearly listed, first by Cruden who also included two excellent plates in his history,³ and secondly by Williamson in his edition of Boyne,⁴ covering, with only slight alterations, the information provided by Cruden. However, on looking into the possibilities of further research on the subject, it seemed that at least an interesting record might be made from the tokens of the local history of the period they covered, roughly 30 years. In so doing, one might discover some hitherto unnoticed information concerning the dating of the undated issues, the locality of the issuers and the issuers of the few tokens whose names were unknown.

Our sources of information, apart from the tokens themselves, are the local records and these have been quoted at varying length by all the local historians; the prime sources being R. Pocock⁵ and Cruden. Pocock, in 1797, had access to a limited number, but he had additional information which he had stored over the years and upon which he could draw. Cruden repeated much of Pocock and set out additional facts from records which, in 1843, had become available to him. The Arnold, Mansfield and Philips histories of Gravesend are useful guides, but contain very little of use to us in our research. The admirable articles by J. Benson which have appeared over the years in the *Gravesend Reporter* are most valuable and have been referred to extensively. The unabridged edition of *Pepys's Diary*⁶ gives a fine contemporary sidelight on Gravesend life and provides important evidence in deciding the issuer of one particular token. For the coins themselves, Williamson's Boyne is the only book to be used, and this is

¹ John Evelyn, *Numismata* (1698).

² Robert P. Cruden, *The History of the Town of Gravesend in the County of Kent and of the Port of London* (1843), p. 364.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ W. Boyne, *Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century* (ed. G. C. Williamson, 1889-1891). For the county of Kent.

⁵ Robert Pocock, *The History of the Incorporated Town and Parishes of Gravesend and Milton in the County of Kent* (1797).

⁶ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of* (Everyman's Library, 1912).

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accurate in most cases, but now needs amplification and a little correction.

There are 23 types of seventeenth-century Gravesend tokens known, and these are easily identifiable. With the Milton tokens, however, some controversy exists. Cruden⁷ mentions 12 while Boyne⁸ lists 14. The argument arises from the fact that there are several Miltons. There is a Milton-next-Sittingbourne, a small parish of Milton near Canterbury, as well as Milton-next-Gravesend, all in the county of Kent. With the aid of the parish records, all except two tokens can be correctly assigned to the latter. These two can fairly safely be put in the Milton-next-Sittingbourne series and will be discussed at the end of this paper.

When endeavouring to match a token to a contemporary record, it must be remembered that the spelling of surnames in those days had nothing like uniformity. The names appeared in a great variety of forms and were written down in whatever manner the writer felt to be correct. One Milton issuer, Anthony Sifflet, had his name spelt in nine different ways. Another factor to consider is that traditional family Christian names were exceedingly popular. Some parents were so determined to have at least one living descendant bearing a favourite name that in a number of cases the same name was borne by several of the family at the same time. For instance, there were six Walter Ninns in less than 80 years.

The earliest token is dated 1651, during the Commonwealth, and was issued by Jacob Parson (G301-2), a most influential and important man in the town at this period. He was undoubtedly a Cromwellian supporter; the events of 1662, when his Commonwealth sympathies became apparent, bear this out. His tokens carry the design of clasped hands with no indication of his calling, but the joined hands *motif* would seem to be evidence of his satisfaction at the victory of the Commonwealth forces, and possibly the hand of common friendship as indicative of the Commonwealth cause. On 25th April, 1651, Oliver Cromwell came to Gravesend and Parson no doubt cheered with the rest of his supporters. An entry in the town accounts for this date reads, 'Payd for wine bread and beere when the Lord Generall came to town and at his returne, by Mr. Mayors order, £01 - 10 - 00.⁹ Only two entries in the accounts refer to Jacob Parson, neither mentions his trade. One in 1642, when he obtained his freedom to trade, and another which reads, '1644 April 3rd, Paid to Jacob Parsons for eyghteen Deale Boards, 16s - 6d.¹⁰

⁷ R. P. Cruden, 364.

⁸ W. Boyne (Milton, Kent).

⁹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gravesend Corporation, Gr/FAc 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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He is well documented in the records, serving the town, except for a brief period between 1662 and 1667, for 30 years. He came to the Corporation in 1646 and was immediately pressed into being one of the collectors for Gravesend parish when an assessment was made on the inhabitants to raise £50. In 1649, the Council of State ordered that the mace belonging to the town be altered and one bearing the Commonwealth arms take its place. This was finished and paid for in 1653, the charge of £23 10s. 0d. being borne by the Jurats and Common Councillors. The Jurats, Parson amongst them, were to pay £1 each and the Councillors 10s. each. Parson had been appointed a Jurat in the previous year, he was Mayor in 1656 and a Justice of the Peace a year later.¹¹

In 1661, an Act of Parliament was passed for regulating Corporations; in other words, to purge them of Commonwealth sympathizers, 'for the Publique Peace and Safety of this Kingdome'. On 14th August, 1662, the Commissioners came to Gravesend to carry into effect this Act. The outcome was that Mayor James Woodcott was removed and his place taken by John Smith (M426), Jurat Jacob Parson was also dismissed; likewise, Thomas Hill (G296), a Common Councilman and Collector of the Fair and Market dues.¹² These will be discussed in greater detail later when we come to a consideration of the undated tokens. Others were removed from office and replaced at the same time but, as they issued no tokens, we can disregard them.

By 1667, it seems that past political differences had been forgotten, or perhaps Jacob Parson was too influential a man to lose, for in that year he was re-elected as a Jurat and in the following year was again Mayor. Additional proof of his value to the town is to be found in the Corporation Minute Book for July, 1669, during his second Mayoralty where an extremely complicated minute is recorded. By the year 1669, the old prison-house and its neighbouring premises were in a very dilapidated condition, so much so that the Corporation decided that they should be demolished and new brick buildings erected in their place. The cost was estimated to be £400 but, unfortunately, there was only £150 in the funds, leaving them £250 short. Mayor Parson was approached and agreed to lend them the balance. To secure this loan the Corporation went through the rather complicated manœuvre of leasing the market to George Oliver (M420) and Walter Nynn (M419) for a term of six years at a nominal rent of one peppercorn, trustees as it were, to repay Parson out of the benefits and profits of the market. There is a provision at the end of the minute that, as soon as the loan is repaid, Oliver and Nynn immediately surrender the lease. This seems to make quite clear the intention of the whole transaction. However,

¹¹ Gravesend Corporation Minute Book (Burmote), Gr/AC2. (Abbreviated hereafter to G.C.M.B.)

¹² R. P. Cruden, 333.

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the sum borrowed increased to £300 and it was not until 1673 that Mr. Parson received all of his money back.¹³

It seems most probable that Parson lived in a house in the manor of Parrock at Milton for he is mentioned in an inquest on a seaman, Samuel Loveridge, from on board the *Interminable*, and who had recently returned from fighting the Dutch. This seaman, in attempting to rob a travelling Frenchman on the London-road in Milton, had been badly wounded in the stomach during the fight. He had been carried to what was apparently the nearest house, that of Jacob Parson, in Parrock, and had there died.¹⁴

Parson's wife Elizabeth, the 'E' on the reverse of his token, had died in October, 1666, and he married a lady named Sarah Hills four months later. He is not mentioned in the records after 1676 except for an entry in the Milton burial register dated 16th October, 1678.¹⁵

The next dated token, the commonest of the Gravesend series, is that of John Watson (G308), in 1653, with the obverse design of a pierced heart. This is followed in Williamson's Boyne by a scarce farthing of John Wetson (G309) having a roll of tobacco as the obverse design. As the same initials, 'I K W' appear on the reverse of each issue it is highly probably that Wetson is a die-sinker's error and that both tokens were issued by John Watson. The name of Wetson has not been found in any of the numerous records that have been searched. The device of a heart pierced by an arrow and dripping blood could well represent the sympathy which he felt for the lost Royalist cause after the Commonwealth success. That he went with John Reddall (G304) in 1660 to have the King's arms replaced on the mace must show his Royalist pleasure and supports the choice of design for one of his tokens.¹⁶ In the Apprenticeship register¹⁷ for 1669 he is classed as a mercer, and he lived in a four-hearthed house on the south side of West-street, near the High-street corner. He came from an old Gravesend trading family, his father and grandfather had been freemen before him and his son was later to follow. Just prior to the date of his token he is several times recorded as selling and hiring deal boards, spars, and brass nails to the Corporation for use at Saint Paul's Fair and the school-house.¹⁸

John Watson first came to public service when he was elected to the

¹³ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC2.

¹⁴ 'Informations and Examinations made and taken before William Dove, Esq., one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Gravesend and Milton', 1673-1677. British Museum, Harl. MSS. 6749.

¹⁵ Milton church burial register. Colyer-Fergusson transcript.

¹⁶ R. P. Cruden, 332.

¹⁷ Register of Apprenticeship Indentures, 1636-1716. Gravesend Muniment Room, Gr/AI, (Abbreviated hereafter to R. of A.I.)

¹⁸ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 1.

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Corporation in 1646, four years after obtaining his freedom to trade. In 1653, while still a Common Councillor, he was appointed Chamberlain and, as such, had all the financial dealings with the alteration of the mace. 1659 saw him a Jurat and the following year, Mayor. In 1670 he was chosen Mayor for the second time having served continuously as a Jurat for the previous 10 years. During the winter months of 1659, following Cromwell's death, the mutinous unpaid soldiers virtually took over the country. Everywhere law-abiding citizens rose against them demanding their disbandment and a free parliament. Gravesend suffered in common with other towns for, on 7th December, Mr. Watson was at Rochester arranging to 'gett the Souldiers removed from Gravesend'. His expenses for the day came to 4s. 8d.¹⁹

In August, 1676, after 30 years' continuous service to the town, John Watson was honourably discharged from the Corporation. Two years later, he was awarded a pension of £10 8s. 0d. and is no longer mentioned in the records.²⁰

Edward Pashlow (M421) of Milton, whose token is dated 1656, was Mayor in the year 1653, and he figures prominently in the affairs of the town. During the Civil War he had been responsible for fortifying the town and the expenses which he incurred are entered in the Corporation books.²¹ We have several records naming him during his Mayoralty in connection with local proceedings and the new marriage ceremonies. In this year, the celebration of marriage was transformed, and an Act of Parliament directed a new form for the solemnization and registry of marriages. Public notice of an intending marriage had to be given in the parish church or market place on three successive Sundays, and after the couple had made their mutual acceptance as man and wife before a Justice of the Peace, his Worship declared the marriage valid.

Pashlow was elected to the Corporation in 1640 at the same time as John Reddall (G304) on the death of two of its members; in 1653, he became Mayor having gone through the stages of Assistant to the Clerks of the Market in partnership with Jacob Parson, auditor and Jurat. During his Mayoralty, it was decided to offer to His Excellency, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, the High Stewardship of the town, an office which he graciously consented to accept. A letter of thanks was sent to Cromwell and this fact is recorded in the Minute Book. "The Lord Generall his Excellency having accepted of the High Stewardshipp of the said Corporation and having confirmed and commissioned John Parker Esq. his Under Steward there, It was then agreed and voted by the major parte of the Jurates and Comon Counsellors of the said Corporation that the letter of thanks as it was written wthout

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC2, and Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

²¹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 1.

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any alteration, and then read in Court and left in the hands of the said Edward Pashlowe Esq^r. Mayor, should bee forthwith humbly p^resented to his Lord Excellancy the said Generall Cromwell.’²²

Pashlow is not mentioned in the records after the Restoration in 1660 although no entry of his death in either of the two parishes can be found. His token shows a full-blown rose, but there seems to be no connection with this emblem and his occupation which is noted in the Apprenticeship Register as being that of a ‘Barber-chirurgion’.²³

The Mermaid Inn token appeared also in 1656. This gives no name, only the initial ‘I D P’, but it is undoubtedly connected with the inn of that name once standing on the south side of West-street. The initials refer to John Preston and his wife Dorothy who held the house at least until her death in 1668. Preston, who was born in 1637, the son of a Milton victualler, was elected to the Corporation in 1670 and appointed Chamberlain in the following year. By 1678 he was a Jurat and, in 1680, was asked to serve as Mayor. However, this undoubtedly expensive position does not seem to have been very agreeable to him and he refused the office. For his refusal, he was fined the sum of £20 which he paid in two instalments, in January and October. Four years later, he was again asked to take the office of chief-citizen and this time he accepted. It was during this term of office in 1684 that the Mayor, Jurats and inhabitants of Gravesend were served with a writ of ‘*Quo warranto*’ and he had the unenviable task of yielding up the Borough charter to King Charles II. The King, in an effort to increase his powers and weaken his political enemies, had ordered the cities and corporate towns of England to surrender their charters. The dismay and anxiety of the townspeople was great, but they were defenceless against the might of the Crown and so, taking the advice of Sir Joseph Williamson, who acted as High Steward of Gravesend, they surrendered the charter into the King’s hands on 28th November. Appended to a copy of the writ in one of the Corporation’s books is the following account of the ceremony by one who was present.

‘Note, That this summons was out of date two days before it was served, and signified nothing; yet notwithstanding, to shew our innocency and our loyalty, we in a full body went to London on the 26th day, a night tide about eight o’clock. The 27th, Sir Joseph Williamson, and Sir John Heath, with the Mayor, 11 Jurats, and 17 of the Common council, did wait and attend at Whitehall, where we were ordered to attend the next day at eleven o’clock, which we did, and were presented to the King by the Earl of Sunderland and Sir Joseph, where Mr. John Preston, then Mayor, did, on his knees deliver the Charter into the King’s hand, which he graciously returned to Mr. Mayor again, and twice bidding him rise, and on the rising of

²² G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 1.

²³ R. of A.I., Gr/AI.

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Mr. Mayor, he said he would take care of us, which hope he will. After that we returned the Charter to the Earl of Sunderland, being Secretary of State, and so went about our concerns.²⁴

Three years later, by the efforts of Sir Joseph Williamson, a new Charter granted by King James II, was borne to Gravesend amidst great jubilation. To defray expenses in connection with this new charter, each Jurat advanced £10, each Common Councillor £5 and the High Steward £20. It was also agreed that, 'One hundred pounds now be borrowed upon the Townhouse towards the paying for the Charter.'²⁵

After his term of office had expired, John Preston was automatically appointed a Justice of the Peace, a position he held until his death in June, 1692.

In the Gravesend Central Library is preserved the red brickwork panel which formed a decorative feature high up on the front of the Mermaid Inn. This consists of a central panel with a well-worked mermaid holding a mirror and combing her hair, very similar to the design of the token. It is, however, later than the token, for it bears the date 1688. The house, although not still an inn, was standing with the panel *in situ* up until 1900, having miraculously survived the numerous fires that devastated the area throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

1657 brings two tokens, one of Margret Bird (G289), and the other of Thomas Wood (G310), both of Gravesend. Neither have so far yielded much information. Margret Bird may have been the widow of the innkeeper of the same surname whose tavern was pulled down in 1649 in connection with the illegal shipment of gold and silver and the dispatch and receipt of Royalist letters.²⁶ Her token shows a hen and chickens, which may be a play on her name or more likely show a connection with the Hen and Chickens Inn which stood on the north side of West-street but which, in 1662, was held by William Naylor.²⁷

Thomas Wood, whose token shows a heart, lived on the south side of West-street and he also owned property elsewhere in the town.²⁸ He purchased his freedom to trade in 1651, but no indication of what that trade was has been found. Tokens in brass and copper are known from this issuer.

1658 gives us one dated token, that of William Crouch (G294), of whom we know very little except that he was apparently Mayor in 1677. His token bears a hand holding a bird which may be a clue to

²⁴ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ R. P. Cruden, 318.

²⁷ Kent Archives Office. Victualler's Recognizances, 1662, Q/RLV 1/10. (Abbreviated hereafter to K.A.O.)

²⁸ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns for Kent, 1664.

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the Falcon Inn, known from Milton entries to have been in East-street, but which in 1662 was held by Thomas Morris. William Crouch is listed in the same year as holding the Blew Boar's Head.²⁹ In the Hearth Tax Returns for 1664 he is charged for nine hearths in a house on the south side of West-street.³⁰ In the Milton registers, in contrast and contradiction to the above, we find that on 29th April, 6th May and 13th May, 1655, the announcement of the forthcoming marriage of 'William Crouch, Lynnon Draper, and Mary Christian of Milton, S.' was read in three public places.³¹ What the 'hand holding a bird' reverse has to do with the trade of linen draper is difficult to imagine, unless, by 1658, he had changed his occupation. In 1680, the town accounts record transactions between William Crouch and the Corporation when he supplied a coat for the town crier.³² He seems to have been elected to the Corporation in 1665 and was for a few months in that year acting as Chamberlain. In 1683 he has 'Exit' written against his name in the Minute Book.³³ It is possible that at one time he was the Borsholder, for in the accounts of the plague year we find the entry, '1665. Sept. 8. Pd for a lanterne that ye bosholder William Crouch had to burie ye dead. £0 - 1 - 6.'³⁴

For 12 years from 1659 we have a period of good records and much activity in Gravesend. During this period came the Restoration, the plague and the Dutch war.

John Reddall (G304) was Mayor as from October, 1659, and he would thus have received the recorded disbursement of £1 10s. 0d. for making the address to the late Lord Protector, Richard Cromwell, on 10th November.³⁵ He was likewise Mayor during the Restoration of Charles II. Everywhere in the country the Commonwealth arms were being replaced by the Royal arms. Gravesend was no exception and Reddall's name was inscribed on the frame of the new painting of the King's arms set up in the Town Hall. He issued two tokens, one with an anchor on the obverse which has been taken as the symbol of Hope for the Restoration, and another bearing the crowned head of the King, taken as an issue subsequent to the King's return. On 9th May, 1660, the Corporation recorded their delight at the King's homecoming, and declared their allegiance by a resolution, that 'by reason of the most happy alteration of Government from a Commonwealth to a Kingly government, under his most excellent Majesty Charles II, the arms of the late Commonwealth and of the late Protector, which were on the mace of the Corporation, should be taken off and defaced, and instead

²⁹ K.A.O. Vict. Recog., Q/RLV 1/10.

³⁰ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns.

³¹ Milton church marriage register. C-F. transcript.

³² Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

³³ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

³⁴ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

³⁵ R. P. Cruden, 321.

thereof his Majesty's arms put and placed thereon, with the motto thereto belonging.³⁶

It was John Reddall who went with Mr. Watson (G308) to have the King's arms replaced on the mace at a cost of £17 10s. 0d., a fortnight before Charles landed at Dover.³⁷ Possibly, in view of the King's passing through Gravesend on his way to London, the alteration had been affected so as to be ready for use on 25th May, the day of his arrival. John Watson, who succeeded Reddall as Mayor in 1660, we have already met in 1653 with the token of the pierced heart. We can well imagine the pleasure of Reddall and Watson, both obvious Royalists, as they carried out the official task of altering the mace. The wheel of fortune had turned its full circle, for in 1653 when the Commonwealth mace had to be paid for, both of them, as young Common Councilmen, had paid their 10s. During the Mayoralty of Reddall it was decided to present the King with a piece of plate. This was done, the cost of £2 10s. 0d. being paid out of the Corporation Purse.³⁸

Other instances of Reddall's anti-Commonwealth sympathies were evidenced by the fact that twice, in 1650 and 1657, he had his waterside stairs or landing-stage demolished by the authorities to prevent the use of them by enemies of the State from secretly entering or leaving the town by water.³⁹

His services to the town began in 1640, the year he received his freedom to trade and his election to the Corporation. In 1651, he was a Jurat, and Mayor in 1659. He lived in one of the largest houses in the district, one with 15 hearths, but apart from the fact that it must have been near the river, it is not known where in Gravesend it was situated.⁴⁰ Reddall's wife Elizabeth, died in 1653; in January of the following year, he married Mary Skeath, the step-daughter of Jacob Parson (G301), but she died in July, 1655. In November of the same year the banns were called for the first time for 'John Reddall of Milton, gent. and Elizabeth Worrell of St. Brides in London', making three wives in just over two years. He himself died in 1663 after a very full public life.⁴¹

In spite of the full documentation of his life no sign of his occupation has come to light and there is only one entry in the town accounts which might have some bearing on it. 'Sept. 29, 1655. Pd. Mr. Reddall for 1000 bricks for mending the Schole House. £00 - 10 - 00.'⁴²

In London in 1660, Samuel Pepys, then an unknown 27-year-old

³⁶ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

³⁷ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ British Museum. Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series.

⁴⁰ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns.

⁴¹ Milton church burial register, and G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁴² Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

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clerk began a diary. It is of great interest to us for the many references to Gravesend that it contains.⁴³

On 8th and 9th June, 1660, Samuel Pepys was at Gravesend returning to London from Deal. Pepys was no stranger to the town at this time, but this is the first entry of real interest. He says, 'Came to Gravesend. A good handsome wench I kissed, the first that I have seen a good while. Supped with my Lord, drank late with Penrose, the Captain . . . Up betimes, 25s. the reckoning for very bare. Paid the house and by boats to London.' In 1662, 30th May, we find Pepys recording that, 'Upon a suddaine motion I took my wife and Sarah and Will by water, with some victuals with us as low as Gravesend.' Here they met a Mr. Shepley in a hoy which they boarded and sailed as far as Half-way Tree. On 2nd August, he came again, 'After dinner, (at Greenwich), we to boate, and had a pleasant passage down to Gravesend, but it was nine o'clock before we got thither, so that we were in great doubt whether to stay there or no; and the rather because I was afraid to ride because of my paine; but at the Swan finding Mr. Henson and Lieutenant Carteret of the Forsight come to meet me, I borrowed Mr. Thompson's horse; and he took another, and so we rode to Rochester in the dark . . .' On 4th August they returned, 'Up by four o'clock and to Upnor Castle . . . So to Rochester and Gravesend. Very dark before we got thither to the Swan; and there, meeting with Doncaster, an old waterman of mine above bridge, we eat a short supper, being very merry with the drolling, drunken coachman that brought us, and so took water . . .'

These two references to the Swan must be the Swan referred to on the undated token reading, 'AT THE SWANE IN GRAVESEND' with the initials 'A M W' (G306). During research into the history of the local tokens, the question arose as to whether it was possible to obtain any close identification, and with Pepys's further help this was successful.

1665 and 1666 brought the plague. Undoubtedly, this ravaged the small Gravesend community with bitter intensity, and must largely account for the lack, with a few exceptions, of any lengthy family connections in subsequent years with the token issuers of this era. There were 150 deaths from the plague in Gravesend between August and December, 1665. Pocock records that in Gravesend 352 died from September, 1665, to September 1666, whilst in Milton the number of deaths was 198.⁴⁴ A very heavy loss indeed. In London, the epidemic started in November, 1664; Gravesend's first victims had fallen earlier, but this did not deter Pepys from visiting the town. On 17th August, 1665, he was again off Gravesend making merry and looking unsuccessfully 'for a new comet which is said to have lately shone.' On

⁴³ *Samuel Pepys's Diary*

⁴⁴ R. Pocock, 92 and 116.

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the next day when Pepys went down to Sheerness, we read, 'To Sheerness, where we walked up and down, laying out the ground to be taken in for a yard to lay provisions for cleaning and repairing of ships, and a most proper place it is for the purpose. Late in the dark to Gravesend, where great is the plague, and I troubled to stay there so long for the tide.'

This was a time of much anxiety, stress and work for Pepys; it represents a vital period in the great part he played in expanding and reorganizing the Navy, whose state was deplorable. Pepys, therefore, found it necessary to engage in much journeying down the Thames.

On Sunday, 17th September, after church, he set out once more for Gravesend on his way to visit the Fleet. Again, on the following Sunday, he writes, 'Waked, and up, and drank; and then, being about Grayes, and a very calm, curious morning, we took our wherry, and to the fishermen, and bought a good deal of fine fish, and to Gravesend to Whites', and had part of it dressed, and, in the mean time, we to walk about a mile from the town, and so back again.' This entry is illuminating for its reference to 'Whites' which could only be an inn.

In 1662, we came across references by Pepys to the Swan Inn at Gravesend, and as he seems to favour the Swan on his visits, the mention of 'Whites' in the record of 24th September might well mean another visit to the Swan. There is an undated Milton token of Arthur White (M427) issued at the Angel and bearing the initials 'A M W'. The token from the Swan Inn also has the initials 'A M W'. Here we have numismatic proof that Arthur White was innholder of both the Swan and the Angel, although probably not at the same time. It is possible to go further. The Victualler's Recognizances for 1662 lists Arthur White as holder of the Swan in Milton, although the Angel is not mentioned.⁴⁵ In the Gravesend Central Library there is a deed of sale dated 31st March, 1684, which deals with, amongst other property, the sale of the Swan. ' . . . and also all that Messuage Tenement or Inn comonlie called or knowne by the name or signe of the Swanne with the appurtenances and all the outhouses stables haylofts edifices buildings gardens ground yards and backsides with their appurtenances to the said Messuage Tenements or Inn belonging . . . situate lying and being in the Towne and Parish of Milton next Gravesend in the said county of Kent and late in the tenure or occupation of Arthur White or his undertenant . . .'

Arthur White came to the Council in 1645, was appointed Chamberlain in 1652, a Jurat in 1657, and Mayor in 1658. He is last mentioned in the list of Jurats in 1671 which accords with the Milton burial register where he is recorded as being buried on 22nd March, 1671, followed in November by his wife Mary. In the year 1666, he was again asked to take the office of Mayor but he refused. Three other Jurats

⁴⁵ K.A.O. Vict. Recog., Q/RLV 1/10.

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were also asked but they all declined and were find the usual £20 for refusing.⁴⁶

Immediately after the Restoration, numerous loyal subjects petitioned the King for the official positions previously held by the 'Oliverians'. Many were the begging letters to the King, each outdoing the other in stories of hardship suffered under Cromwell, and full of assurances of faithful loyalty to the absent Crown during the troubled times. Several went from the people of Gravesend, Arthur White being one of the early ones. He wrote requesting that he be allowed to continue as Postmaster of Gravesend and Milton, declaring that he had been dismissed from service in the Navy for loyalty, was obliged to keep an inn at Milton and had obtained the office of Postmaster in 1645, but had lost much in the Kentish rising of 1648. His petition was probably successful for it is endorsed, 'Mr. Alcock's recommendation'.⁴⁷

The name of Arthur White as a Jurat appears in the lease of April, 1663, when the bowling-green land at the west end of the town was leased by John May (G297) to the Gravesend Corporation.⁴⁸ When peace was proclaimed between England and Holland in 1667, at a small celebration Mr. White supplied the wine at a cost of 19s. 6d.⁴⁹

The Swan would appear to be one of the most important hostelries in the town at this time as several accounts of expenses for official meetings held there are in existence. The inn stood on the east side of the High-street where the modern Kent public-house now stands. Until quite recently Swan-yard was a turning out of Queen-street, and this may indicate where the inn-yard stood. The first mention of the Swan so far found is in the will of Richard Asheley, dated 1510, and the last 1828 when the site became the Kent.⁵⁰

Arthur White, whom we have decided was the landlord at one period, was a Milton man; the inn was in Milton, the question therefore arises, why does the inscription on the token read, 'AT THE SWANE IN GRAVESEND', and not 'IN MILTON'?

The Angel, which receives far fewer mentions in the town's muniments, also stood in the High-street in Milton. Its position was where no. 3 now stands near the town quay. The inn and its stables were almost totally destroyed during the disastrous fire of 1727 when nearly half the town was burnt down.

The year 1666 provides us with three dated tokens, those of John May (G297), Walter Ninn (M419) and William Reade (M422).

John May lived in quite a large house on the south side of West-

⁴⁶ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁴⁷ B.M. Cal. of State Papers (Dom).

⁴⁸ R. Pocock, 20.

⁴⁹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAC 2.

⁵⁰ Gravesend Muniment Room. Victualler's Recognizances, 1815-1856.

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street.⁵¹ His token shows a man with a staff carrying another on his shoulders. This picture is connected with the legend of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers. It is also associated with the calling of the apothecary, and as such John May is described in the case of the bowling-green land in April, 1663.⁵² In the Apprenticeship Register for the years 1654 and 1658, May's occupation is noted as being that of a 'chirurgeon'.⁵³ He was made a freeman in 1651 and elected to the Corporation shortly afterwards, remaining a Common Councillor until 1659 when he was appointed Chamberlain. He is recorded as being a Jurat in 1661 and Mayor in 1662, becoming a Justice of the Peace in the following year. He does not appear in the Minute Book after 1669, having died in the late November of that year.

When the altered Cromwellian mace was paid for in 1653 John May, as a Common Councillor, paid his 10s. It is of interest to note that for a few years John May and George May, who was probably his brother, were serving on the Corporation at the same time.

The Ninn family, whose occupation was that of bakers, came to Gravesend in the early seventeenth century and disappeared from view in 1776. There were six Walter Ninns (with various spellings of the name) mentioned in the parish records, and they are noted as being Mayors on five occasions between 1679 and 1762. This profusion of Walter Ninns makes it extremely difficult to separate the token-issuer from his sons. The token appropriately bears the baker's arms, and it is felt that the issuer was the Mayor who, on 23rd July, 1680, with 28 other members of the Corporation, signed the renunciation of the Solemn League and Covenant. This renunciation by the Corporation so long after the Restoration and not earlier, was probably a wise move on their part in view of the continued suspicions on both sides, and the precautions which those suspicions made necessary.

Several entries referring to money paid to a Mr. Ninn can be found in the accounts, the earliest being 1640, but as these are coroner's fees and legal expenses, they do not appear to relate to the Ninn in whom we are interested.

Although it seems that Walter Ninn was active in the business of the town from an early date, he does not appear to have joined the Corporation until 1668. He was immediately appointed one of the Collectors of the fair and market dues in partnership with George Oliver (M420). He had married, in June, 1665, a Milton lady by the name of Susan Lee but, in November, 1666, she died, and this would probably account for the lack of his wife's initial on his token. 1668 saw him

⁵¹ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns.

⁵² R. Pocock, 20.

⁵³ R. of A.I., Gr/AI.

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married again to a lady with a very similar Christian name as his first wife, Susana.⁵⁴

In 1675 Walter Ninn (Nynn) was one of the principal witnesses in an enquiry into the activities of Anne Neale, a reputed witch of the area. In his evidence he informed the Justice, Mr. Dove, that about four years previously his servant and apprentice, William Eason, whom he had taken in 1667, was suddenly stricken with strange and violent fits, crying out that Anne Neale had come several times to his bedside. On recovering he returned to work, but one day Anne went to Nynn's bakehouse, whereupon William once again went into violent fits, raving and shouting that she had bewitched him. These fits lasted for three days until William finally died. Walter Nynn concluded his evidence by saying that four months later his 2-year-old son, Thomas, was taken strangely ill and died, 'bewitched to death by Anne Neale'.⁵⁵

In 1686 a new charter was requested; Walter Ninn, then a Jurat, was one of the committee set up to consider any alterations which might be required in the constitution and to make an assessment on the Freemen and inhabitants to get money for the cost of renewing the charter. He himself is assessed at £3. In the accounts for 1686/7 there is a record of expenses for celebrations at the time of the new charter and this includes, 'Payd Mr. Walter Ninn for 1 Cqt of biskett and 6 Doz. Rowles. £1 - 10 - 0'.⁵⁶

It is not known where in Milton the Ninn bakehouse stood, at least the token states, 'IN MILTON', but a later bakehouse of the family stood on the south side of West-street in Gravesend, next to the Unicorn Inn. This house was damaged in the great fire of 1727.⁵⁷

Of William Reade (M422/3), a Milton man, very little is known. His tokens carry the arms of the Pewterers, and he is the only issuer of the two parishes to issue both halfpennies and farthings. He paid his £6 10s. fee to trade in 1660 and took his first apprentice in 1666, the year of his token.

In the Minute Book of the Corporation is a most interesting entry regarding William Reade. He does not appear to have been very active in the service of the town, and in 1673 he asked to be discharged from serving as a Common Councillor. His request was granted but he had to pay to the Corporation the sum of £10 for the favour.

No further news of him can be found after 1678 when he was an Overseer of the poor for Milton. His death is not recorded in the local records, nor is that of his wife, whose initial 'M' on his tokens probably stood for Mary, since he had two daughters of this name.

⁵⁴ Milton church registers. C-F. transcripts.

⁵⁵ B.M. 'Informations and Examinations', Harl. MSS. 6749.

⁵⁶ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/Fac 2.

⁵⁷ K.A.O. U713 T36, Q/SB 1727.

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A rare, heart-shaped, halfpenny token of William Baldwin (M414) of Milton appears in 1667. The reverse of two fleurs-de-lis does not convey much to us; neither do the parish records, although the name William Baldwin, in a variety of spellings, is frequently encountered in the Milton registers for about this time. A William Baldwyne is named in the Minute Book as a Common Councilman having been elected in the year of his token. He was born in 1607, his father being a tailor, and he died in 1673. In his will, he is recorded as a haberdasher, his wife Marie being his sole beneficiary.

On 4th April, 1654, at the West Kent Quarter Sessions at Maidstone, information was laid by John Watson (G308), mercer of Gravesend, against William Baldwyn of Gravesend, tailor, to the effect that for the space of six months Baldwyn had been exercising a craft or practicing a trade without serving a seven-year apprenticeship. Common informers, such as Watson, supplied the information in the hope of personal gain in the form of a share of the fines imposed.⁵⁸

Also in 1667, Robert Day (G295), a Gravesend tailor, issued his halfpenny token with the appropriate obverse of a pair of scissors. He purchased his freedom to trade in 1655 paying £4 in two instalments to do so, and lived in a small house on the south side of West-street. This gentleman was a Quaker who, with a relative, Thomas Day, was imprisoned in Maidstone jail for his opinions. They were found guilty on one of the earliest charges brought against Quakers, that of not swearing, acting upon *Matthew v. 34*, they swore not at all.⁵⁹

This year brought the Dutch War with its fights and skirmishes in the Thames. Pepys's diary for this period gives us an insight into the lives of the inhabitants of the town, for on the 10th June we read, ' . . . Down to Gravesend, where I find the Duke of Albemarle just come, with a great many lords and gentlemen, with their pistols and fooleries; and the bulwark [that is, the blockhouse] not able to have stood half an hour had they [the Dutch] come up; but the Dutch are fallen down from the Hope and Shell-haven as low as Sheerness, and we do plainly at this time hear the guns play. Yet I do not find the Duke of Albemarle intends to go thither, but stays here tonight and hath, though the Dutch are gone, ordered our frigates to be brought to a line between the two blockhouses; which I took then to be a ridiculous thing. I find the townsmen had removed most of their goods out of the town, for fear of the Dutch coming up to them; and from Sir John Griffen [an error for Sir John Griffith, captain of the fort at Gravesend] that last night there was not twelve men to be got in the town to defend it; which the master of the house tells me is not true, but that the men

⁵⁸ K.A.O. Information Roll of Informations supplied by Common Informers at West Kent Quarter Sessions, 1652-1654, Q/SRm 1/3.

⁵⁹ *Kentish Note Book*, ii, 108.

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of the town did intend to stay, though they did indeed, and so had he, at the Ship, removed their goods . . .' In a letter to Sir William Coventry, dated 11th June, Pepys writes, ' . . . During my being at Gravesend I heard distinctly great guns play below, and at my coming away Sir William Jennings and the Commanders were going on board by the Duke of Albemarle's order to bring up their ships and place them in a line thwart the River between the forts. I met several vessels in my going down laden with the goods of the people of Gravesend. Such was their fright . . .' In several of the following entries he writes of his journeys to Gravesend and of the complaints of the people about the neglect of the King's officers in not being prepared. Then on 24th July ' . . . About five o'clock down to Gravesend, . . . and as we come nearer to Gravesend, we hear the Dutch fleet and ours a-firing their guns most distinctly and loud. So I landed and discoursed with the landlord of the Ship, who undeceives me in what I heard this morning about the Dutch having lost two men-of-war, for it is not so, but several of their freships . . .'⁶⁰ The two references to the Ship Inn quoted above are important, and we will return to them later.

1668 gives us two dated tokens. A scarce octagonal halfpenny of Matthew Butler (G291), and a very rare heart-shaped halfpenny of William Kemster (M418). Practically nothing is known about either of them.

Butler, who was a Gravesend tailor, was sworn a freeman of the Corporation in the year he issued his token, paying the full fee of £5 0s. 6d. to the Chamberlain for the privilege.⁶¹ Apart from an entry in the register of his marriage to Dorothy Stevenson, the 'D' on his token, in 1665, nothing more is known of him.

William Kemster of Milton is known only by the fact that his name occurs in an assessment upon the parishioners in the year 1687, and by numerous entries in the parish registers, including his death in August, 1690. The device of bunches of grapes on his token is a puzzle as no record of his occupation can be found.

On Sunday, 6th September, 1668, Pepys went with Henry Russell by water to Gravesend, ' . . . coming thither about one, where, at the Ship, I dined; and thither came to me Mr. Hosier whom I went to speak with . . .' Again the reference to the Ship.

In 1669, George Head (M416) of Milton issued his halfpenny token with the reverse of a ship in full sail. This could well be connected with the inn mentioned by Pepys in his entries quoted above, for it was quite an important place. History records that in 1614 the King of Denmark came to England on his second visit, and on 1st August, His Majesty, with King James and Prince Henry, on their way to Rochester, halted

⁶⁰ *Samuel Pepys's Diary.*

⁶¹ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

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at Gravesend and dined at the Ship Inn. Much of the town's official business was conducted there, and in the accounts for the period under review several references are made to the Ship. To quote a few, 'January 12. 1648, Item paide for a quarte of burnt Clarett and a pinte of Porte and fageets at the Shipp when Mr. Woodcott and Mr. Cleare were auditing the acoumpts. Two Shillings and foure Peence.' 'March 13. 1649, Paid for a dinner at the Ship when Mr. Maior satt clarke of the Markett as appears by bill, £01 - 04 - 09.' Late on we find, 'July 11. 1649, Item paide for wine for the Judge being att the Shipp and his folowers unto Mr. Peny the summ of seven shillings. And for cakes to shillings six p. And for 12 lb of cherryes four shillings, and for a sugar loofe unto Mr. Hall the shop-keeper att 2 pounds 14 ozs. the summ of seven shillings 4p.'⁶²

By about 1780 the Ship had been divided into two tenements and had ceased to be an inn. J. R. S. Clifford in his little guide-book, *Gravesend and its Neighbourhood* (1886), writes that the inn formerly stood where now the northern corner of Bank-street meets the High-street. This old wooden structure was burnt down in the fire of August, 1850, which cleared most of the Milton side of the street. Several of George Head's family are mentioned in the registers. He himself died in 1681 and his wife, Mary, in 1702, both being buried at Gravesend.

John Biddle (G288) who issued the only dated token of 1670, had received his freedom to trade in 1667 paying only 3s. 10d. for the privilege as he was 'made free by his father's copy'.⁶³ He was elected to the Corporation in 1673 and was immediately appointed one of the Collectors of the fair and market dues. In 1678, he was made Chamberlain and was one of the signatories of the renunciation of the Solemn League and Covenant of 23rd July, 1680. When the new charter was requested in 1686, John Biddle is noted as a Common Councillor and as such is assessed at £1 10s. In 1690, he is recorded as having died, 'Mort est', while still a Common Councillor. This agrees with the Gravesend burial register where his death is entered on 1st February, 1689/90, followed on the 10th by his wife, Alice.

His halfpenny token has on the obverse a pope's head and was undoubtedly issued from the inn bearing that sign, for we know that the Pope's Head was an inn on the north side of West-street until early in the twentieth century. The Victualler's Recognizances for 1662 lists a William Beedle of Gravesend as holder of the Pope's Head.⁶⁴ As this gentleman was the father of the token-issuer, it would appear that John took over the inn after his father's death in 1667. In the County Archives

⁶² Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 1.

⁶³ Gravesend Muniment Room. Admissions of Freemen, 1659-1736. Gr/R of I. Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

⁶⁴ K.A.O. Vict. Recog., Q/RLV 1/10.

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Office at Maidstone there is preserved a probate inventory for John Biddle dated 14th February, 1689/90, where he is recorded as being an innholder, the cash value of his goods amounting to over £170. The house was a large one, having about 14 rooms, including a summer-house and several stables.⁶⁵

1671 gives us the latest dated token of either Gravesend or Milton. It was issued by Thomas Warren (G307) of the former parish and bore his initials coupled with that of his wife, Joan, whom he had married in 1668. The obverse design of three rabbits relates to the fact that he kept the Three Conies Alehouse in Gravesend. Some 10 years later he is listed as holding the White Hart.⁶⁶ He had been sworn a freeman of the Corporation in January, 1667, and is first mentioned as a Common Councillor in 1679, which position he held until he was appointed Chamberlain in 1695. When he died two years later the parish registers listed him simply as a 'householder'.

A local by-law makes it an offence, punishable by a fine of 3s. 4d., for appearing in Court on Court days in indecent apparel. In 1696, at a Court Burmote held in the Town House, it was ordered that, 'William Symonds, Gent, Mayor, do forthwith yssue out his warrants ag^t the goods of James Goldsmith and Thomas Warren, for the payment of the fines layd upon them by the Court for their not having Cloakes according to the Constitutions.'⁶⁷

In 1675 Thomas Warren was the chief witness at the examination of Anne Neale, the Gravesend witch. William Charles, a vintner of Gravesend, employed Anne as a pot-carrier, and it was part of her duties to carry wine and ale to and from the Three Conies Alehouse. She was known locally as an 'ill-tongued woman' and rumour had it that she was a witch, having done harm to several neighbours, their cattle and goods. Warren accordingly took precautions and forbade her to come any more to his house at which she became exceedingly angry, bitterly cursing him and reviling him. Shortly afterwards trouble began to pile up for Warren. Some of his horses, which before his disagreement with Anne Neale, had been fit and well, became sick and died. One even hanged itself, and two mares died in the 'strangest manner that had ever been seen'. Warren's 2-year-old son, Walter, who had been handled by the old woman several times, became sick and was stricken with 'strange and awfull fitts and strugglings'. For 19 weeks the boy languished, pined, wasted away and finally died. Warren concluded his evidence by telling the enquiry that he believed these calamities were caused by witchcraft, enchantments and sorcery and that Anne Neale was to blame.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ K.A.O., Pi 25/1.

⁶⁶ K.A.O., U47/13 T10, U145 T59/2.

⁶⁷ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁶⁸ B.M., 'Informations and Examinations', Harl. MSS. 6749.

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A royal proclamation of August, 1672, announced new copper currency and ordered the withdrawal of token money. This meant that Warren's tokens had a very short life indeed, and only a few were issued, making them some of the rarest of the series.

We are now faced with the problem of the remaining undated tokens, and an endeavour must be made to put them into some sort of chronological order. The evidence is unfortunately very scanty and so every reference in the records must be taken into account.

Let us start with that of Marck Medhoust (G298), if only for the reason that he is a very elusive person. Nothing is to be found in any of the numerous muniments so far searched of a trader of this name, or, allowing for the varied spelling of the time, any name like it. His half-penny token indicates that he was a Gravesend mercer and with that crumb of information we must, for the present, be satisfied. In the early years of the following century the family of Medhurst is well documented, being tallow-chandlers, whilst two members became Mayors.

We are placed in a similar position by the lack of knowledge of another Gravesend trader, William Oliver (G299). The only possible applicable entries are in the Milton register of burials where a gentleman of this name is recorded as being buried on 12th April, 1666, and the Hearth Tax Returns for Milton in 1664 which charges William Oliver for six hearths. The obverse design of a cannon on his token may be a clue to his possible occupation of an innkeeper for we know that in the seventeenth century there was an inn called by the sign of the Gun. Its exact location is not known but the indications are that it was in Milton. '1606, Richarde Tompson of ye Gunne' buried, and in 1609 Richard Cockett, the landlord of the Gun was one of the 'four and twenty capital inhabitants'. These entries, amongst others, are in the Milton registers, whilst the Gravesend ones do not mention an inn of this name at all. The legend on the token, however, if we accept the cannon as the sign of the Gun, contradicts the documentary evidence and gives us, WILLIAM OLIVER AT (the Gun) IN GRAVESEND'. In the Victualler's Recognizances for 1662 the Gun is listed, as is also the Lower Gun, neither of them at that time being held by Oliver. In the late eighteenth century the Lower Gun was in East-street in Milton parish, so perhaps the Gun was at the upper end of the town and the Lower Gun at the other.

Thomas Boone or Bone (G290) was most probably a tobacconist, the only evidence for which is the obverse design on his token of a roll of tobacco. He came from an influential family, his father having been Mayor in 1645. He himself joined the Corporation in 1656 and was made a Jurat in 1664. Less than a year later he was dead. His wife Martha, whose initial 'M' is on the reverse of his token had died three months before him in June, 1665. In his will, he asked that 'twenty shillings be

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laid out in bread to be given to the poor of Gravesend on ye day of my burial'.⁶⁹ The Victualler's Recognizances (1662) records a Thomas Bone of Gravesend as holding the Golden Anchor, while the Hearth Tax Returns for 1664 charges him for 11 hearths; quite a sizeable dwelling.

Thomas Clarke (G293), who issued a token from the Boar's Head in Gravesend, is another about whom very little is known. He did not serve on the Corporation and consequently is not recorded in the minute books or accounts of the town except for an entry when he received his freedom in July, 1660. The 'M' in the initials undoubtedly stands for Mary, his wife, whose death in the plague year of 1666 is entered a fortnight after the death of his daughter Katherine in the Gravesend register. This would seem to indicate that the token is pre-1666. The Hearth Tax Returns for Gravesend lists him for seven chargeable hearths.⁷⁰ Of the Boar's Head itself, the earliest mention found is a conveyance, dated 1718, of a 'messuage or tenement commonly called or known by the name or sign of the Boar's Head or Blew Boar's Head'. A later document of 1786 gives its position as being on the west side of the High-street north of the White Hart. This would be where no. 76 now stands.

In April, 1666, token-issuer John Cheesman (G292) died, probably of the plague. In his will, he left his house and goods to his wife Katherine and daughter Winifred. Katherine, however, did not live to enjoy them, for she died three weeks later. The initials, 'I E C' on the reverse of the token would seem to indicate that Katherine was not his first wife and thus the token must be one of the early ones. Between 1636, when a chrysom child of John Cheesman was buried, and the death of John himself, the only entries in the registers of both parishes are of baptisms and burials of his children. The token shows that it was issued from the Sun Inn at Gravesend. There were at least three inns bearing this sign in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the inn of John Cheesman can, with some degree of certainty, be placed in West-street. In the 1662 Victualler's Recognizances he is listed for two inns in Gravesend parish, the Sun and the Cross Keys. In the Hearth Tax Returns for two years later he is again recorded twice, both on the south side of West-street. One was a large house with 10 hearths, the other a smaller one with only four; possibly his two inns. Going back a little, in 1631 Samuel Fletcher, a tailor of the town, granted to Thomas and William Collett a tenement 'in a street there called West Street abutting to the said street towards the north and to a messuage or tenement called the Sonne to the east'. There can be little doubt

⁶⁹ K.A.O., DRB/PWR. 219. XXIV.

⁷⁰ K.A.O. *Hearth Tax Returns*.

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that, from this description coupled with the Hearth Tax Returns, the Sun of John Cheesman was on the south side of West-street.⁷¹

Little is known of his life. He began trading in 1644 when he purchased his freedom, and was elected to the Corporation in 1656, being one of the Collectors for the market in the following year. He does not appear to have been very ambitious and remained a Common Councillor until his death. In this plague-year, of the 24 Councillors in office, seven died.⁷²

The farthing token of George Oliver (M420) of Milton bearing the device of a sugar-loaf would seem to indicate that he followed the calling of a grocer, while his will, he died in 1687/8, records him as a tallow-chandler.⁷³ He is also listed under this trade in the Apprenticeship Register. The town accounts for 1685 have an entry which reads, 'By 3s. 4d. to Mr. Oliver for candles for the Cryer'.⁷⁴ He was elected a Common Councillor in 1667, and shortly afterwards appointed as one of the Collectors of the fair and market dues with Walter Nynn (M419) as the other collector. In 1679, he became a Jurat and was Mayor in 1680 when he signed the renunciation of the Solemn League and Covenant.⁷⁵

George Oliver was still a Jurat when, in 1686, the new charter was requested. In the assessment list, dated 17th September, 1687, to raise money for the charter, he is assessed at £3.⁷⁶ The initial 'A' coupled with his own 'G' on the reverse of his token undoubtedly stands for Ann his wife who died in March, 1672. No connection has been traced between him and William Oliver (G299) of Gravesend who issued the undated 'cannon' token.

Anthony Sifflet (M425), to use the spelling on his token, was a Loose man who came to Milton to marry Ann Norman in 1630. His name appears to have presented great difficulty to the scribes of his day for there are in the records nine different ways of spelling his surname and three of his Christian name. The marriage did not last very long for Ann died in 1636, and in 1639 Anthony married again, this time to Mary Stokes, who died in August, 1666. In October of the same year he married for the third time, her name being Ann Bartlett, and it is her initial that is on the reverse of his token. His death three years later in 1669 means that the token must therefore have been issued between these two dates, 1666 and 1669.⁷⁷

Sifflet was elected to the Corporation as a Common Councillor in

⁷¹ Gravesend Central Library.

⁷² G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁷³ K.A.O., Pi 2/58.

⁷⁴ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/FAc 2.

⁷⁵ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Milton church burial register. C-F. transcript.

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1644, Collector of the market dues in 1645 and Chamberlain in 1646. There are only two references to him in the town accounts, both for the year 1646 and both for hiring of horses to town officials. When the town's mace was altered to the Commonwealth arms (1649) and paid for (1653), Mr. Sifflet as a Common Councillor paid his 10s. He remained a Councillor until 1656 when he became a Jurat, but he is not mentioned after the Restoration year of 1660. In 1657, when John Smith (M426) was Mayor, he refused the office of chief citizen and the following is entered in the minutes: 'The said Anthony Syfleete was then by and with the General assent of the Comon Councillmen of the Corporation aforesaid elected Mayor of the villages and parishes aforesaid for the year now next ensueinge wwho though present in Court did then refuse to take the said Oath of a Mayor to exercise the said office of Mayor there in all things etc. And for such his refusall hee the said Anthony was then fyned Twenty pounds wch the said Anthony did then pay to Mr. John Hall then Chamberlain for the tyme being to the then Mayor aforesaid.' Another Jurat, Michael Furlow, was next asked but he too refused and was likewise find £20.⁷⁸

We now come to the question of his occupation, and it turns out to be that of an innkeeper. The device on the obverse of his token is that of a large ball and the question is simply answered by the Victualler's Recognizances of 1662 where Anthony Syfleete of Milton is recorded as holding the Golden Ball. In his will, where he is classed as a yeoman, he left to Ann his wife, ' . . . the messuage or tenement wherein I now dwell, commonly called or known by the name or sign of the Ball, with the buildings, yards, backsides, casements and appurtances thereof, situate and being in the town and parish of Milton-next-Gravesend . . . ' He also possessed buildings and land at Ightham.⁷⁹

The token bearing the inscription, 'JOHN PIKE AT BLACK', and an anchor on one side, and 'ANKER IN GRAVESEND', on the other, poses us another problem. There is very little in the records of either parish which can be tied up with John Pike (G303) except for an entry of the burial of a daughter, Elizabeth, in 1649. Also, the only mention so far found of the Black Anchor is in the year 1622, when it was in the possession of Richard Bourne.⁸⁰ John Pike is first noted in the Corporation minute book in 1644 when he received his freedom to trade. He appears in 1657 as a Common Councillor and is one of the Collectors of the market dues in 1658, in partnership with John Cheesman (G292). He is not mentioned after 1661, no record of his death has been found and he is not listed in the 1662 Victualler's Recognizances; neither is the Black Anchor. The questions, who, where and what, must therefore

⁷⁸ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

⁷⁹ K.A.O., DRB/PWR. 78. XXV.

⁸⁰ K.A.O. Vict. Recog., Q/RLV 1/10.

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remain until a stroke of luck produces documents to provide the answers.

Thomas Hill (G296), also of Gravesend parish, a grocer, as his brass and copper tokens plainly state, lived in a small house on the south side of West-street.⁸¹ He had been a staunch Commonwealth supporter whose removal by the Commissioners in August, 1662, when he was acting as Collector of the fair and market dues, has already been noted. In July, October and December of the plague year, 1666, John his son, he himself and Rebecca, his 10-year-old daughter, all died. His wife, Sarah, whose initial appears on the token, survived him by nearly 20 years, dying in 1694.⁸²

A very common name in those days, as now, was John Smith (M426), and it is exceedingly difficult to sort out the token-issuer in whom we are interested from all the other entries in the records. There were at least eight John Smiths buried at Milton during the period under review, amongst whom are a waterman and the Captain of the Blockhouse, neither of whom is likely to have issued the farthing token with the obverse of a walking bird. The 'E' in the initials is of little help either as there were three Elizabeths buried, all of whom were entered as wives of John Smiths. The significant entry is a burial for the year 1657, when an Elizabeth is noted as the 'wife of John Smith Jurate'. He is the most likely person to have issued the token, and if so we can assume that it was issued before this date. A John Smith held the high office of Mayor in 1657 and, unless it was another of the same name, again in 1665. When he was Mayor in 1657, he spent a considerable sum of his own money in 'amendinge and repayreinge and adorneinge and beautifieinge of the Townhouse'. At a Court held in this house in April, 1659, the question was raised as to whether he and his Chamberlain, John Hall, should be discharged from their accounts. After some discussion it was agreed that the accounts were good and so were allowed.⁸³

On 14th August, 1662, when James Woodcott, the Mayor, was removed by the Commissioners from office, John Smith was appointed in his place, but he can only have held the position until the new Mayor, John May, whom we have already discussed, was elected at Michaelmas.

In the Apprenticeship Register the occupation of John Smith is recorded as that of a distiller. J. C. L. Stahlschmidt in his book *Church Bells of Kent* (1887) refers to the inscriptions on some of the bells in Milton Church, presumably the names of the donors. One reads, 'John Hodson made mee 1656. John Smith Disstilar', and it seems certain

⁸¹ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns.

⁸² Milton church burial register. C-F. transcript.

⁸³ G.C.M.B., Gr/AC 2.

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that this bell was the gift of the pious, successful and influential token-issuer who had been at one time one of the churchwardens of Milton.

In the Corporation Minute Book there are details of a Court Burmote held on 16th December, 1707.⁸⁴ The matter under discussion was the free use of a passage from the 'messuage or tenement called the Three Cornish Choughs heretofore in the tennure, possession or occupation of John Smith, Gentl. deced.'. The interesting point is that this inn was previously called the Cornish Chough. If the bird on the token is a chough and John Smith was the innkeeper, dead by 1707, it is possible that this token was issued from the Cornish Chough. This sixteenth-century house, which is situated on the Town Quay in the parish of Milton, is still in existence, although much enlarged, and is now known as the Three Daws.

Of the several burials of John Smiths in the registers, the one most likely to have been the person in whom we are interested was the one who died in October, 1678. John Smith or Smythe as he is often recorded, is last mentioned in 1676/77, and this agrees with the burial register entry.

Very similar difficulties arise when we consider the token of John Jones (M417) for we are faced with the prospect of several John Joneses. However, it seems pretty conclusive that the token-issuer is the one who was elected to the Corporation in October, 1658, remaining a Common Councillor until his death in 1665. A widow named Mary Jones was buried in 1673 and this could have been his wife for the reverse of his token bears the initial 'M'. On the obverse is a cross pattee, and this is explained by the 1662 Victualler's Recognizances where John Jones of Milton is listed as holding the Red Cross.⁸⁵ This inn has not yet been located but it must have been of some importance for it is mentioned many times in the Milton registers for over a hundred years. It would seem that this was the house in Milton occupied by John Jones which was charged for 10 hearths in the 1664 Hearth Tax Returns.⁸⁶

The two remaining tokens in the list of Boyne for Milton are that of a grocer named Richard Bunce (M415) and James Richmond (M424), a glazier. These are not mentioned in the lists of Pocock or Cruden, neither can the families be found in any of the local records. In the Hearth Tax Returns for Kent, both Bunce and Richmond are entered for the Hundred of Milton in the Lathe of Scray.⁸⁷ This seems to indicate that both the tokens were issued from Milton-next-Sittingbourne.

It is almost certain that no further issuers of Gravesend or Milton tokens will be found, but undoubtedly more information will be forth-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ K.A.O. Vict. Recog., Q/RLV 1/10.

⁸⁶ K.A.O. Hearth Tax Returns.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

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coming in the future as and when more local documents are discovered and analysed.

A few extracts from the town accounts can usefully be quoted to illustrate the chaotic state of the coinage in the parishes just prior to the period of the tokens.⁸⁸

'1635/36, Received more of him (the late Chamberlain) in badd farthings, £04 - 05 - 09½.

1637, October 25, Paide unto Walter Skeate twenty seven shillings wh. was owd to him from the towne in Mr. Bauldwocks maioralty by paying him £4 - 16 - 9 in bad farthings wh. he is contented to take in lue of his debt.

1643/44, Lost by odd fathings, £1 - 12 - 6.

1649/50, Impr. Received of Michael Furlowe lat Chamberlaine in money £10 - 19 - 10 whereof there was 1 brass halfe crown and 1 brass shilling.

1651, October. Lost in Brass money. £00 - 02 - 06.

1659, May 17. Received of Mr. John Lyall late Chamberlayne the Summe of forty four pounds and five shillings whereof there was foureteene shillings in Brass. £44 - 05 - 00.

The above state of affairs was not confined to Gravesend but was very prevalent all over the country, and this, added to the shortage of small change, was one of the reasons for the issue by the traders of token money.

Pocock, in his history, tells us that the population of the combined parishes in 1797 was about 4,000.⁸⁹ Over a century and a half earlier it would have been considerably less, perhaps in the region of 2,000, and it seems extraordinary that there should be £4 5s. 9½d. in bad farthings in the Corporation funds. This suggests that there were local forgers (we know of some at Wombwell Hall in adjoining Northfleet, in 1652),⁹⁰ or perhaps the entry was made to cover up some entirely different discrepancy in the accounts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to the staffs of the Kent Archives Office at Maidstone and the Public Library, Gravesend, also to Messrs. E. R. Green and V. T. C. Smith for their help.

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⁸⁸ Chamberlain's Accounts, Gr/Fac 2.

⁸⁹ R. Pocock, 248.

⁹⁰ B.M. Cal. of State Papers (Dom).