

Local History: 17th Century Trade Tokens

The tokens recorded for Alton seem to all be farthings and were probably issued by prominent tradesmen, who may have also been the Churchwardens or the Overseers of the Poor, both groups being early administrators in the town.

The tokens seem to have been issued in the years 1650, 1652, 1663, 1664 and 1666.

They bear the inscription "OF ALTON IN" "HAMPSHIRE" with some of the following initials - WWT, IH, TB, LL

- T
WW could refer to William Turner of 62 High Street and may be William Wake, tallow chandler
- IH could be John Hockley of 35 High Street
- TB might represent Thomas Braman of 31-33 High Street
- LL is thought to represent Lawrence Lamport, also of the High Street.



The majority of tokens found today are farthings, although halfpenny and penny values were produced.

Trade tokens were issued in the 17th century, between 1648 and 1673, because there was a lack of low denomination coins produced by the crown.

The tokens usually carry the name of the issuer, the town, the arms or symbol of the trade, the initials of the issuer and often the date and value of the piece.