

Cronebane Halfpenny Tokens

A Quick Guide To Counterfeit Coins



A Tigroney Short Guide

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Tigroney Short Guides

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Introduction

The mining area at Avoca in County Wicklow is divided by a steep river valley through which flows the River Avoca, formed by the confluence of the Rivers Avonbeg at Avonmore a mile upstream of the mines at the Meetings of the Waters. The Macclesfield Copper Company purchased the Irish mines in the townlands of Cronebane and Tigroney in 1787 and invested heavily over the next twelve years to make the newly formed Associated Irish Mine Company one of the major copper producers of the period.

In order to solve the problem of a lack of coinage during the reign of George III (1760-1820) the Associated Irish Mining Company became early pioneers of paying their workers in part with company tokens. The less extensive mining operation on the western side of the valley in the townland of Ballymurtagh was operated by a separate company, Camac, Ryan and Camac, who later produced their own copper halfpenny tokens but in far fewer numbers.

The huge proliferation of token halfpennies minted predominately by Mathew Bolton in Birmingham was an attempt by employers and trades people to satisfy the demand for small coinage which became prohibitively scarce and subject to counterfeiting due to the rapidly expanding population and the industrial revolution. The coinage crisis was not helped by the King ceasing the production of small denomination coins in 1775, forcing companies to find alternative methods of paying their workforce

The first tokens to be produced were by the Parys Mine Company in Anglesey during 1787 to pay their workers. Trade tokens of this period are more correctly referred to as Eighteenth Century Provincial Tokens or as Condor tokens after James Condor who produced the first definitive list or catalogue (Condor, 1798); which was later expanded and refined by Dalton and Hamer (1910-17) in which many thousands of variations are described.

The Macclesfield Copper Company engaged John Westwood at 22 Great Charles Street in Birmingham to supply the tokens for their subsidiary the Associated Irish Mine Company in 1789. However, he did not possess the presses to actually strike the coins. So while he was able to supply the copper blanks with the edges already inscribed, it was Matthew Boulton at the Soho Works who actually pressed the finished tokens.

The Macclesfield Copper Company paid Westwood £36-10s for each ton of coins delivered, with Westwood agreeing to pay Boulton £18 per ton of finished tokens. However, there were considerable problems for Boulton in getting paid for the work he had done due to the insolvency of John Westwood before the tokens were delivered. This interesting saga has been explored by David Vice (1991).

Cronebane tokens (copper halfpennies) were the first coinage to be struck anywhere in the world using a steam operated press (Rodgers, 2009). The Soho Works in Birmingham would go on to be a major mint (Tungate, 2009), but the lack of experience in the new technology meant that the Cronebane tokens were not struck in collars. All the Cronebane tokens had been struck by September 1789, some 20 tons in total, estimated to have been 1,674,185 individual tokens. The dies were engraved by J.G. Hancock and each coin weighs 194.4 grams and has a diameter of 29.0 mm. Details of the design are given below.



- Obverse:** *Inscription* - CRONEBANE HALFPENNY
Image - Bust of St Patrick wearing a cape with a cowl and mitre facing to the right. In front of him is a crozier with a ribbon tied in a bow on the shaft.
- Reverse:** *Inscription* – ASSOCIATED IRISH MINE COMPANY
Image – Arms of the Associated Irish Mine Company with a windlass position above the crest. The year 17 89 is separated by the crest.
- Edge:** PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN . X .

Eventually the Government was forced to take action against the proliferation of the use of trade tokens and in July 1797 Mathew Bolton was given the contract by the Government to produce copper coinage primarily for the payment of workers thereby reversing the need for tokens to be produced. However, in the early 1810's much of the government copper coinage, which due to a rise in the price of copper exceed its face value in terms of the copper used per coin, was melted down to produce counterfeit trade tokens. This activity was only brought under control through the great recoinage of 1816 and the subsequent outlawing of tokens through an Act of Parliament in 1817. This was the end of the trade token in Great Britain and Ireland, although the coinage continued to be used throughout the world as a generic halfpenny.

Mathew Boulton refused to strike counterfeit tokens and so it is not known where or by whom the Cronebane counterfeit tokens were made. It is estimated between 3 to 4.5 million counterfeit Cronebane tokens were minted between 1789 and 1816, although the latest recorded date on a counterfeit token is 1796.

PAYABLE AT CLOUGHER OR IN DUBLIN – X X – - **Go to step 18**

PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN ·X· - **Go to step 21**

PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE OR IN DUBLIN - **(D&H 46a)**

PAYABLE X AT X CRONEBANE X OR * IN * DUBLIN X O X - **Go to step 22**

PAYABLE AT DUBLIN CORK OR BELFAST · X X · - **Go to step 23**

PAYABLE AT JOHN SAWERS ROMNEY - **(D&H 43f)**

PAYABLE AT LEEK STAFFORDSHIRE - **(Provisional D&H 43h)**

PAYABLE AT LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL + - **Go to step 27**

PAYABLE AT LONDON CORK OR BELFAST - **(D&H 39d)**

PAYABLE AT LONDON LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL - **(D&H 39c)**

PAYABLE AT LONDON OR BELFAST - **(Provisional D&H 40a)**

PAYABLE AT N. BOLINGBROKE’S, HABERDASHER, &C., NORWICH - **(D&H 49d)**

PAYABLE AT RICHARD LONGS LIBRARY. - **(D&H 44c)**

PAYABLE AT THE WAREHOUSE LIVERPOOL X X X - **(D&H 75)**

PAYABLE BY I. SIMMONS STAPLEHURST - **(D&H 43e)**

PAYABLE BY THOMAS BALL SLEAFORD - **(D&H 43d)**

PAYABLE IN ANGLESEY LONDON OR LIVERPOOL · - **(D&H 39a)**

PAYABLE IN CURLINORK DERRY OR LIMERICK - **(D&H 56)**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN CORK AND BELFAST - **(D&H 42Bis)** (Not in main D&H key see Addenda page 548)

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN CORK OR DERRY - **Go to step 28**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN CORK OR DERRY . . . - **Go to step 31**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN DERRY OR LIMERICK - **Go to step 32**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN OR AT BALLYMURTAGH - **(Provisional D&H 44g)**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN OR IN BALLISHANNON + + - **(D&H 55)**

PAYABLE IN DUBLIN OR LONDON + · + - **(D&H 44)**

PAYABLE IN HULL AND IN LONDON - **Go to step 33**

PAYABLE IN HULL AND LONDON ·XX· - **(D&H 39b)**

PAYABLE IN LANCASTER LONDON OR BRISTOL - **Go to step 34**

PAYABLE IN LANCASTER LONDON OR LIVERPOOL - **(D&H 44b)**

PAYABLE IN LONDON (and engrailed) - **(D&H 75a)**

PAYABLE IN LONDON BRISTOL & LANCASTER -X- - **Go to step 37**

PAYABLE IN LONDON BRISTOL AND LANCASTER - **(D&H 50a)**

PAYABLE IN LONDON LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL - **(D&H 35)**

Step 2. Edge: Plain

O: Bishop's Head - **Go to step 3**

O: Not Bishop's head instead:

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 - **Go to step 4**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date) - **Go to step 5**

Step 3.

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1789 - **Go to step 6**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 - **Go to step 7**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date) - **(D&H 39e)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Crest with crowned head. PAYABLE IN DUBLIN NEWRY OR BELFAST - **Go to step 8**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Figure of Justice. FOR CHANGE NOT FRAUD - **(D&H 63)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: H and bugle horn within a shield. PAYABLE IN DUBLIN OR BELFAST - **Go to step 9**

O: Bishop's Head, R: PAYABLE AT THE RESIDENCE OF.....& HOLT - **(D&H 57)**

Step 4.

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789, R: Bust of John of Gaunt - **(D&H 72a)**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789, R: Bust of Earl Howe. Coin not in collar - **(D&H 71a)**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789, R: Dove with olive branch - **(D&H 73)**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789, R: St Andrew with his cross - **(D&H 74)**

Step 5.

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date), R: Dove with olive branch, 1796, UNITED FOR A REDORM OR PARLIAMENT - **(D&H 69)**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date), R: Bust of Earl Howe - **(D&H 70)**

Step 6.

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1789. Coin in collar - **D&H 18** (not a counterfeit)

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1789. Coin not in collar - **D&H 32**

Step 7.

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 Coin in collar - **D&H 49e**

O : Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 Coin not in collar - **Go to step 10**

Step 8.

Top of Bishop's crosier to N in HALFPENNY - **(D&H 61a)**

Top of Bishop's crosier to E in HALFPENNY - **(D&H 67)**

Step 9.

O: Bishop with a crosier:

Top of crosier to F in HALFPENNY - **(D&H 60)**

Top of crosier to E in HALFPENNY - **(D&H 66)**

O: Bishop without a crosier. Obverse reads CRONEBANE NEW * MINE * - **(D&H 65)**

Step 10.

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789

O: Crosier absent - **(D&H 43g)**

O: Crosier present - **Go to step 11**

Step 11.

R: 9 in date between RS - **(D&H 44d)**

R: 9 in date against R - **(D&H 48c)**

R: 9 in date against S - **(D&H 51d)**

**Step 12. Edge: Milled **

O: Bishop's Head (no inscription), R: Blank - **(D&H 1)** (not a counterfeit)

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1793 - **(D&H 35a)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 - **(D&H 51c)**

O: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date) R: A sailing ship inscription Navigation and Trade - **(D&H 77)**

13. Edge: Engrailed >>>>>>>>>>>>

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 - **(D&H 51b)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Hibernia - **(D&H 68a)**

Step 14.

O: Bishop's head, R: Ship sailing (Inscribed LIVERPOOL HALFPENNY) - **Classified by D&H as a Liverpool Mule D&H 122 (p81) (D&H 78)**

Step 15. Edge: CURRENT EVERY WHERE

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789 - **(D&H 51a)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Bust of Earl Howe - **(D&H 71)**

O: Hibernia, R: Bust of John of Gaunt - **(D&H 76)**

Step 16. Edge: PAYABLE AT ANGLESEA LONDON OR BRISTOL

O: End of lower ribbon hangs down straight but not past the period. Upper ribbon comes close to base of Y but does not touch it ... **(D&H 45)**

O: End of upper ribbon touches lower part of Y the lower ribbon hangs down straight below period ... **(D&H 46c)**

Step 17. Edge: PAYABLE AT BIRMINGHAM LONDON OR BRISTOL

O: Bishop's Head without crosier - **(D&H 43b)**

O: Bishop's Head with a crosier - **(D&H 46b)**

Step 18. Edge: PAYABLE AT CLOUGHER OR IN DUBLIN – X X –

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1789 - **Go to Step 42**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789

O: Crosier over period - **(D&H 47)**

O: Crosier nearly touching period - **Go to Step 19**

O: Crosier clear of period - **Go to Step 20**

Step 19.

R: Shading of arms clearly visible - **(D&H 48)**

R: Shading of arms scarcely visible or missing - **(D&H 49)**

Step 20.

O: Top curve of crosier to base of P in Halfpenny - **(D&H 50)**

O: Top curve of crosier to E in Halfpenny - **Go to Step 40**

Step 21. Edge: PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN ·X·

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1789 - **Go to step 41**

Step 22. Edge: PAYABLE X AT X CRONEBANE X OR * IN * DUBLIN X O X

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1789

O: Crosier absent - **(D&H 43)**

O: Cosier present - **(D&H 46)**

Step 23. Edge: PAYABLE AT DUBLIN CORK OR BELFAST · X X·

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms (no date) - **Go to Step 24**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Miners Arms 1794 - **(D&H 52)**

Step 24.

O: No period after word HALFPENNY - **(D&H 36)**

O: Period present after word HALFPENNY - **Go to Step 25**

Step 25.

O: Upper end of ribbon points between foot of Y and the period - **(D&H 39)**

O: Upper end of ribbon points towards foot of Y - **Go to Step 26**

Step 26.

R: Shovel handle rising left extends to left of E - **(D&H 37)**

R: Shovel handle rising left extends to right of E - **(D&H 38)**

Step 27. Edge: PAYABLE AT LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL +

O: Bishop's Head, R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1793 - **(D&H 35b)**

O: Bishop's Head, R: Bishop Blaze and lamb (inscribed ARTIS NOSTRÆ CONDITOR) - **(D&H 58)**

Step 28. Edge: PAYABLE IN DUBLIN CORK OR DERRY

R: Arms crest and a crowned head. Legend reads PAYABLE·IN·DUBLIN·NEWRY·OR·BELFAST - **Go to Step 29**

R: Associated Irish Miners Arms - **Go to Step 30**

Step 29.

- O: Top curve of crosier against E of HALFPENNY - **(D&H 62)**
- O: Top curve of crosier against N of HALFPENNY - **(D&H 61)**

Step 30.

- O: Top curve of crosier against E of HALFPENNY - **(D&H 41)**
- O: Top curve of crosier against N of HALFPENNY - **(D&H 42)**

Step 31. Edge: PAYABLE IN DUBLIN CORK OR DERRY

- R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1795, 1 in date between C and I - **(D&H 53)**
- R: Associated Irish Mine Company 1795, 1 in date against C - **(D&H 54)**

Step 32. Edge: PAYABLE IN DUBLIN DERRY OR LIMERICK

- R: Cypher H M & Co. (inscribed CAMAC RYAN AND CAMAC HALFPENNY) - **(D&H 59)**
- R: H and bugle horn inside crest. Dated 1795 - **(D&H 60)***

Step 33. Edge: PAYABLE IN HULL AND IN LONDON

- R: Shading of arms clear - **(D&H 48a)**
- R: Shading of arms scarcely shows - **(D&H 49a)**

Step 34. Edge: PAYABLE IN LANCASTER LONDON OR BRISTOL

- R: Associated Irish miners arms - **Go to Step 35**
- R: Figure of Justice - **Go to Step 36**

Step 35.

- O: Bishop without crosier - **(D&H 43c)**
- O: Bishop with crosier - **(D&H 44a)**

Step 36.

- O: Bishop without crosier - **(D&H 63a)**
- O: Bishop with crosier - **(D&H 64)**

Step 37. Edge: PAYABLE IN LONDON BRISTOL & LANCASTER

O: Bishop R: Associated Irish miners arms - **Go to Step 38**

O: Bishop R: John of Gaunt - **(D&H 64Bis)**

O: Bishop R: Hibernia - **(D&H 68)**

Step 38.

O: John of Gaunt - **(D&H 72)**

O: Crosier on period. Both ends of ribbon above Y - **(D&H 47a)**

O: Crosier to left of period but almost touches. Ends of ribbon either side of foot of Y
- **Go to Step 39**

Step 39.

R: Shading of arms clearly visible - **(D&H 48b)**

R: Shading of arms scarcely visible or missing - **(D&H 49b)**

Step 40.

O: Base of bust has clear edge - **(Provisional D&H 51e)**

O: Bas of bust has a flaw resulting in broken edge - **(D&H 51)**

Step 41. PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN X

Not a counterfeit but one of the following true Cronebane halfpenny tokens... **(D&H 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31)**

Step 42. Provisional D&H 28a

The obverse of the new token is identical to Dalton and Hammer Wicklow 28 (p.528) with the traditional bishop's head in profile with a crosier tied with a bow with the words Cronebane halfpenny in capitals. As with D&H 28 the end of the upper ribbon comes to the last limb of N, and the lower one to the base of the Y. There is a significant gap between the ends of the ribbon and the Y. Also, as seen with other examples of D&H 28 there is a discernible gap between the letters E and N in halfpenny.

The reverse of this token is also as in D&H28 with the handle of the windlass touching the second limb of **R** and the top of the 1 of the date comes to the lower part of **T**, while the 89 of the date fall between the letters **C** and **O** of COMPANYY.

So the new coin is identical to D&H 28 except that the edge inscription does not read PAYABLE AT CRONBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN X, but rather PAYABLE AT CLOUGHER OR IN DUBLIN –XX–. Apart from the former inscription the edges of the tokens not considered counterfeits (i.e. D&H 1-32) are either milled (D&H1) or plain (D&H 18). There are only six other tokens that carry the reverse inscription Associated Irish Mine Company, all of which are clearly counterfeits. The edge inscriptions of those dated 1789 are: D&H 32 (edge: plain), D&H 33 (edge: PASSABLE EVERYWHERE) (note the correction of this edge inscription in Dalton and Hamer page 553), D&H 34 (edge: PAYABLE AT CRONEBANE LODGE OR IN DUBLIN X)(note that this coin was not confirmed by Dalton and Hamer). Those dated 1793 include D&H 35 (edge: PAYABLE IN LONDON LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL), D&H 35a (edge: milled), and finally D&H 35b (edge: PAYABLE AT LIVERPOOL OR BRISTOL).

This newly described token can be classed as a counterfeit due to the unusual edge description on a Company token. The identical resemblance to D&H 28, which is a very common token, suggests that this token, as well as D&H 29 and 30, which all have identical obverse sides, may all be counterfeits and were produced after the initial production of the token using the same dies but different blanks.

D&H 28a. O: As 28
 R: As 28
 E: PAYABLE AT CLOUGHER OR IN DUBLIN –XX–

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