



**TIPPERARY HISTORICAL JOURNAL  
1988**

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**ISSN 0791-0665**

# TIPPERARY TOKENS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

*By Michael Kenny*

During the period of the Great Rebellion (1641-53) many of the warring factions issued emergency coinages to complement the increasingly scarce regular coinage of Charles I. The result was a plethora of denominations, weights and metals, from gold pistoles to copper farthings. "Lord Justices Money", "Dublin Money", "Ormonde Money", "Confederate Money" and "Siege Money" all circulated at different periods and in different areas, presumably with considerable overlapping.

With the advent of Cromwell and the collapse of Confederate and Royalist opposition all those emergency issues came to an end. Cromwell issued no coinage specifically for Ireland, so that the only official issues in circulation were those of the Commonwealth. There was, however, a great and growing demand for small change, and the contemporary coinage was obviously unable to cater for the needs of the trading community. It was against this background that the first copper tokens were struck in the 1650s.

The 1650s in Ireland was a time of expansion in the economy after the devastation of the 1640s. As one historian has commented, there was little else for it to do.<sup>1</sup> Low rents, high prices and exceptionally favourable trade conditions prevailed, and "before long the resumed exchange of Irish agricultural products for English necessities had raised customs yields to an unprecedented level".<sup>2</sup> The merchant and trading classes obviously benefitted. These were in the main "new" English, with only a sprinkling of "old" English and Irish.

Under the Commonwealth, the Catholics lost control of the town corporations and were prohibited from engaging in trade. In the words of the historian Margaret McCurtain, "the successful removal of catholic landowners and well-to-do merchants and tenants either by transportation or emigration, placed the sources of wealth and power into the hands of protestant colonists . . . civic life, political authority and landownership had passed finally into the hands of colonial settlers."<sup>3</sup>

The upsurge in economic activity was given further impetus by the fact that many of the new proprietors wanted quick returns for their investments. As Aidan Clarke puts it, "the trade revival that took place against a background of expropriation and deprivation in the 1650s was not a product of a healthy economy: it was the manifestation of the hectic exploitation of low-cost investments in Irish resources by men whose circumstances compelled them to capitalise their gains intensively and quickly through production for the market".<sup>4</sup>

The capitalist attitude of the Cromwellian soldiers and adventurers not only influenced commerce, but also manifested itself in the area of land ownership. Many of the planters, admittedly, did not stay; but it has been claimed that their mobility "merely encouraged the process by which land became a commodity to be bought and sold and used in a purely commercial spirit. Ireland thus passed suddenly and traumatically from a society where land was the basis of social relationships and of the life-style of a community to one where it was a commercial asset available for sale or exploitation. Profit had become more important than prestige and power".<sup>5</sup>

Under such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the lack of coin was keenly felt by the traders, entrepreneurs and miscellaneous carpet-baggers who descended on Ireland after the Cromwellian victory. The gap was filled by copper and brass tokens, the first of which were issued in the early 1650s. By the end of the decade the initial trickle had become a veritable



flood, as merchants, traders, millers, apothecaries and post-masters throughout the country issued tokens.

It should, of course, be emphasised in this context that not all tokens were issued by small-time traders. Colm Gallagher, who has studied tokens and their issuers in detail, has made the point that a considerable number of issuers were goldsmiths and metal-workers, people for whom small-change transactions hardly arose very often. Several post-restoration issuers, too, held municipal offices, positions to which “stiff property qualifications attached”.<sup>6</sup>

Gallagher’s explanation — and it seems reasonable — is that the issuing of tokens may have been to some degree a “quasi-banking or speculative venture”. Among the new people were probably quite a few who were determined to make their money by trading on the traders.

It appears that, on the whole, issuers behaved responsibly, in most cases the dies, and even the blanks from which the pieces were struck, being ordered from established manufacturers in London. Most of the tokens were pennies, and more than 800 different issuers are recorded from the cities, towns and villages of Ireland between 1653 and 1679.

These token issues provide an interesting record of the economic and commercial life of 17th-century Ireland, particularly since many pieces give not only the name, but also the trade or occupation, of the issuer. Some carry the coat of arms of the guild or company to which the issuer belonged. Others make use of symbolism — a wheatsheaf for a baker, a still for a distiller and woolpack for a wool merchant. A small number use symbols which are a pun on the issuer’s surname — a swan for Swan, a harp for Harper, a deer (hart) for Harte.

An attempt by Charles II on his restoration to introduce copper farthings in the early 1660s was unsuccessful. He granted a patent or licence to Sir Robert Armstrong to strike farthings for 21 years and banned the use of the tokens described above; but the new coins were extremely unpopular and only circulated for a short time. Tokens were back in circulation by the mid-1660s and continued to be produced until prohibited and driven out of circulation by a substantial issue of heavy regal halfpennies in 1680.

#### TOKEN ISSUES OF CO. TIPPERARY

TOWN	NUMBER OF TOKEN ISSUERS RECORDED
Clonmel	10
Cashel	6
Carrick-on-Suir	3
Nenagh	3
Thurles	2
Borrisokane	1
Borrisoleigh	1
Lismalin	1
Moyne	1
Roscrea	1
Tipperary	1
TOTAL	30

The most noticeable feature of the list above is the concentration of issuers in the southern half of the county, particularly in Clonmel. Indeed, the towns of Clonmel, Cashel and Carrick-on-Suir together account for almost two-thirds of the county’s total. The high figure for Clonmel is



hardly surprising when one considers its economic pre-eminence in the second half of the 17th century, not only in Tipperary but in the region generally, as a textile manufacturing centre.<sup>7</sup>

It is also worth noting in the light of what has been said already that Clonmel had, by 1667 “the highest proportion of enumerated New English (49%) of any Tipperary town and this figure had been significantly augmented since 1660 when Burke estimated the immigrant population at about one fifth of the total.”<sup>8</sup> William Smyth, in his study of Tipperary during the mid-17th century, has made the point that no less than 78% of the wealthiest inhabitants of the town at this point were New English. Among them it was the merchants who dominated — men like Hamerton, Moore and Perry — whose mercantile wealth allowed them to rapidly acquire extensive estates in the Clonmel region.<sup>9</sup>

In the northern end of the county Nenagh, Roscrea, Borrisokane and Borrisoleigh together have only six recorded issuers. This may reflect a lower level of urbanisation, a lighter concentration of planters, or both.

The purpose of this article is to list, describe and, where possible, illustrate the known token issues of Co. Tipperary. A more detailed study of the actual issuers would, of course, be more interesting, since this would entail an examination of contemporary documentary sources.

In the case of Clonmel, much of this information of course, is already available in the admirable work of W.P. Burke.<sup>10</sup> The tokens listed below are those known to the writer at the time of going to print, and basically comprise an illustrated updating of the works of Williamson and Macalister,<sup>11</sup> both of which recorded the tokens of Ireland alphabetically by town.

It is emphasised that the tokens described below are merely the principal types and issues. There are numerous varieties where punctuation is changed. The five pointed star is replaced by a six-pointed star, or the name of the town or issuer is spelt differently. There are, for example, at least half-a-dozen different spellings of Cashel.

#### BORRISOKANE \*

1. Thomas Woollford

Obv: ★ THOMAS-WOOLLFORD. In centre a bell, flanked by letters T, C and, above, W.

Rev: ★ MERCHANT-OF-1668. In centre, BURRIS/CANE and below •1D

#### BORRISOLEIGH

2. Stephen Radford

Obv: STEPHEN-RADFORD. In centre, lion rampant.

Rev: ★ BVRRESOLE MARCH. In centre, ★1D★

#### CARRICK-ON-SUIR

3. Peeter Alyward

Obv: PEETER-AYLWARD. In centre a shield, bearing two fleurs-de-lys above and a crescent below.

Rev: CARRICK-MARC. In centre 1D with fleur-de-lys on either side.

\*Editorial Note: In this list an asterisk denotes a 5-petal flower design. Also, in Nos. 16 (before ‘Clonmel’) & 32 (before ‘Fitzgerald’) a diamond design appears, and Nos. 4 and 28 have a crescent design with a dot on either side.



The name Aylward is old English, as is Devereux on No. 5. This suggests that the Cromwellian “take-over” of Carrick-on-Suir was not as thorough as that of Clonmel. Among the ten issuers in the latter town, there is not one identifiable Old English name. The christian name is also interesting; the same spelling or misspelling appears on a Cashel token listed below, that of PEETER BOYTON.

4. Philip Daye

Obv: PHILIP·DAYE. MARCHANT. Stag within a double tressure.

Rev: \* OF CARRICKMEASHURE. In centre :1D:

5. Walter Devereux

Obv: ★ WALTER:DEVEREVX. In centre, WD in monogram, three six-pointed stars around.

Rev: ★ OF CARRIKE:MAR, last two letters ligated. In centre four six-pointed stars.

# CASHEL

6. Peeter Boyton

Obv: ★ PEETER BOYTON. In centre, a harp.

Rev: OF CASHILL-MARCHN. In centre ★1D★

The Boytons were of Old English stock. A Nicholas Boyton, a member of a Grand Jury at Cashel in 1617, was fined and imprisoned for recusancy.<sup>12</sup> Peeter Boyton was an alderman on the Council appointed in 1687 by the charter of James II. According to Williamson, writing in 1891, “in the old cathedral upon the rock there is a small shield upon which are the arms of Boyton, three spur rowels with the name of Boyton in old English letters upon it”.<sup>13</sup>

7. Edmond Kearney

Obv: EDMOND:KEARNEY: In centre a plain cross, with pellet in each angle.

Rev: CASSHEL MARC: In centre, EK, 1D (the D is reversed) and four small pellets. (On some examples the D is not reversed).

8.

Obv: EDMOND·KEARNEY: Cross Pattée.

Rev: CAS/SHEL/HALFE/PENY in four lines.

9.

Obv: EDMOND KEARNEY. Plain cross.

Rev: CASSHEL, 1666. 1D

According to Williamson, the issuer was “one of the Common Council appointed under the charter (of 1687), and by the same charter two of the same name were appointed Alderman and three of the same name Common Councillors, so that evidently the family was of some importance at the time.”<sup>14</sup> Williamson also suggests that the issuer was probably related to the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, David Kearney.



10.

Obv: ★EDWARD★MIHILL. Cathedral or church.

Rev:★OF★CASHALL★

★D★

E1M

★★★

The issuer “is believed to have been a retired trooper of Cromwell’s and his will appears in the district registry of the Probate Court, Waterford and in it he bequeaths all his property to his wife”.<sup>15</sup> This will is dated 6 February 1663. Interestingly, Peeter Boyton, noted above, is listed as one of the witnesses — somewhat surprising if Mihill was a Cromwellian soldier.

11.

Obv: \*\*IOHN\*NEVE. Coat of arms, five fleurs-de-lys on a cross.

Rev: \*\*IN\*CASSHELL. 1 1<sup>D</sup> N

Williamson (who received a considerable amount of information on the Cashel issuers from J. Davis White) noted that “the will of John Neve, dated December 25, 1667, is still in existence and is supposed to be that of the issuer”.<sup>16</sup> He did not, unfortunately, state where the will was lodged. The Neve family died out in 1820, according to the same source.

12.

Obv:\*\*\* IOHN\*PEENE (Pyne?). Coat of arms.

Rev: IN . CASSHELL.

\*D★

11<sup>P</sup>

J. Davis White reported that “the name has not been found at present in the documents or archives of Cashel”.<sup>17</sup>

13.

Obv: ROBERT . PRINCE Castle

Rev: OF . CASHELL. 1664. ★1<sup>D</sup>★

“Robert Prince was City Treasurer and his name appears constantly in the Corporation books. He was chosen Alderman and appointed City Treasurer in the room of his father, October 1 1686. He died that same year and was buried at St. Johns, May 10, 1686”<sup>18</sup> The fact that Prince took over from his father suggests that the family was of considerable importance. In the light of what has been said earlier regarding issuers, it is interesting to note that he was not a minor figure but a holder of municipal office.

## CLONMEL

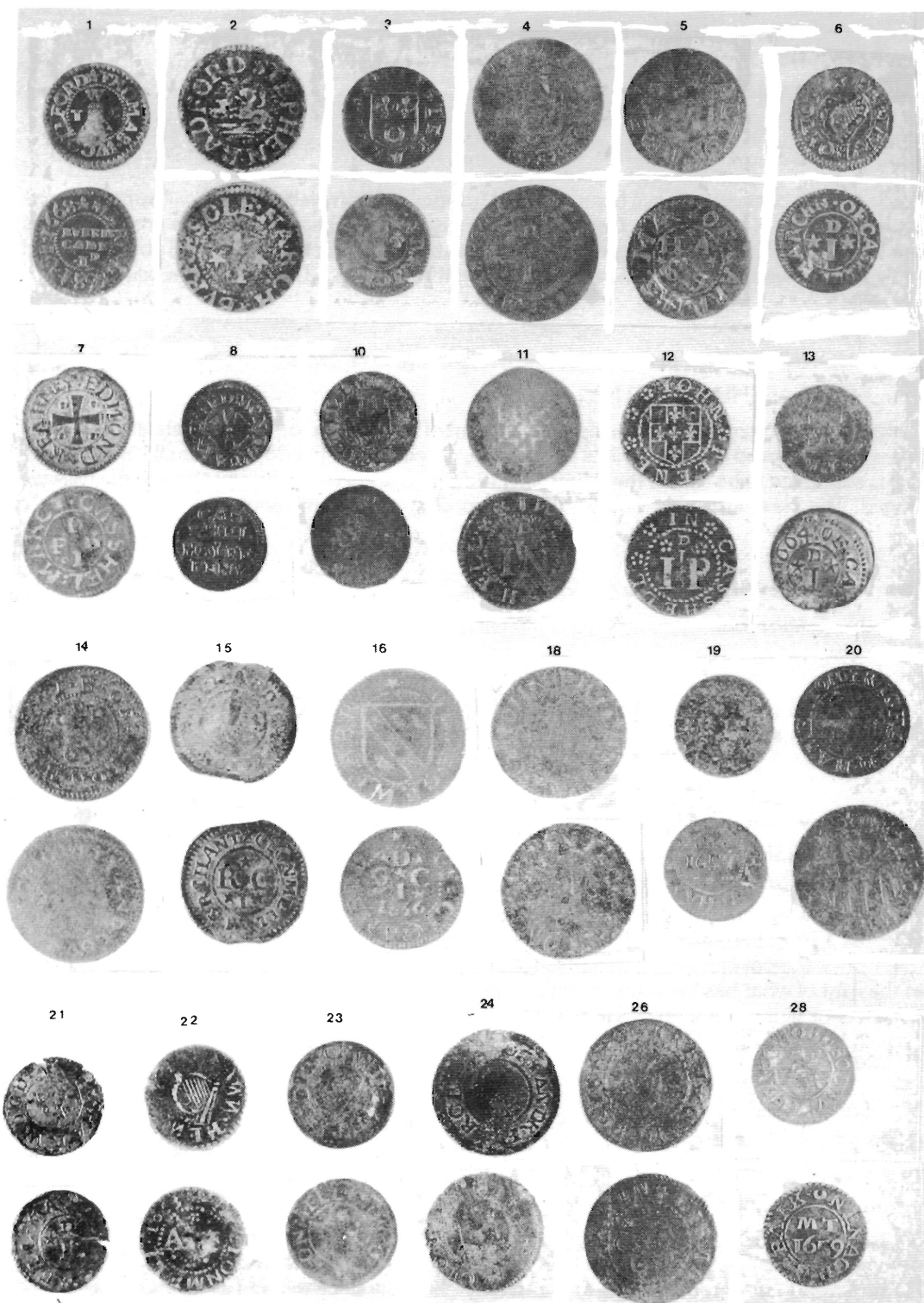
14. John Booker

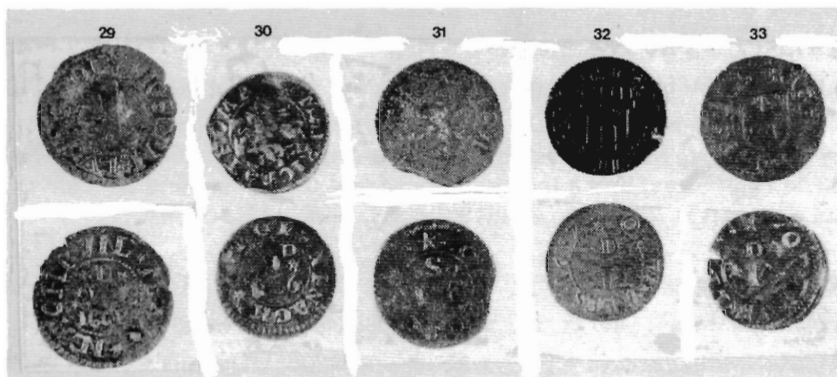
Obv: ·1·B OF·CLONMELL In centre C 1<sup>D</sup> C and below, 1658.

Rev: ★FOR CITY AND COVNTY. In centre, bridge (of four arches); above dog chasing stag to right; below fish swimming to left (Arms of Clonmel).

John Booker had been a drysalter in London who “joining the Parliamentary army, eventually obtained command of a regiment which in 1646 he brought over to Ireland to aid Inchiquin”.<sup>19</sup> He received considerable property and wisely changed sides at the Restoration. His name







*The tokens of Martin Dix (no. 17) and Thomas Moore (no. 27) are not represented in the National Museum collection, and are therefore not illustrated here. Varieties of Edmond Kearney (no. 9) and Andrew Robeson (no. 25) are not illustrated for the same reason.*

crops up on the Rent Roll of 1654 as owning a dwelling-house, mill and bake-house, and also in the Pole Money Book of 1661, where he was levied for £2, a considerable sum of money.<sup>20</sup> In 1666 he owned several slated houses and a kiln in North Lane.

#### 15. Richard Carleton

Obv: ·RICHARD·CARLETON·OF. Arms of Clonmel, as no. 14, but without fish.

Rev: ★CLONMELL MERCHANT

R★C

★1D★

According to Burke, Carleton came from Cambridge and set up as a wine merchant in High Street, from where he retired a country gentleman to Darlinghill in 1676.<sup>21</sup>

#### 16. George Carr

Obv: ★GEORGE ◀▶ CARR. Arms of Carr of Tewkesbury.

Rev: ★OF ◀▶ CLONMELL. G 1D C, five pointed stars and below, 1656.

Carr is listed by Burke as “a shopkeeper in High Street, who, as the son of John Carr, a gentleman, considered himself entitled to quarter his arms on the coin”.<sup>22</sup> His name appears on the Rent Roll of 1654 the Pole Money Book of 1661 and the Settlement of 1666.<sup>23</sup> In 1666 he is listed as owning two slated houses and a lime yard.

#### 17. Martin Dix

Obv: MARTIN DIX CLONMELL. Dagger and pierced mullet.

Rev: IN TIPPERARY MUNSTER. In centre, a harp.

Dix is not listed by Williamson or Macalister, but is noted by Burke as a token issuer. His name appears in the 1654 Rent Roll where he is titled “Major”. It can be presumed that he had been in Cromwell’s army.<sup>24</sup>



18. John Fryers

Obv: ★ IOHN:FRYERS·IN·1668. In centre, a ship.

Rev: ★CLONMEL·PEVTERER. Arms of Clonmel, but minus the fish (similar to Carleton's token).

John Fryers and his wife Mary are listed in the Pole Money Book, 1661. In 1666 he owned a slated house in High Street and a thatched house and garden in Blind St. One of the Free Burgesses of the town in 1688 was Gilbert Fryers, probably his son.<sup>25</sup>

19. Richard Hamerton.

Obv: :RICHARD HAMERTON. In centre, R H, quatrefoil above and below.

Rev: ★★IN CLONMELL. In centre 1657, ★above and below. (A variation of this token has the date on the obverse).

Hamerton, a timber merchant, made his money from the export of pipe-staves and became extremely wealthy. By 1666 he had property in Blind St., High St., and Shamells Lane, including slated houses, thatched houses and stables.<sup>26</sup>

20.

Obv: ★RICHARD HAMERTON. Arms of Clonmel.

Rev: ★OF CLONMELL 1664. Leaping dolphin.

(A variation of this token has the leaping dolphin on the obverse).

21. John Harwood

Obv: \* IOHN·HARWOOD. Three fleurs-de-lys.

Rev: OF CLONMELL MA. ★1D★

Harwood was a shopkeeper.

22. Ann Henbury

Obv: \*ANN HENB V RY. Harp with seven strings. N's reversed.

Rev: IN CLONMELL 1663. A H, cinquefoil of pellets above and below, also single pellets.

Ann Henbury was the wife of William Henbury, noted below.

23. William Henbury

Obv: ★ WILLIAM HENBURY OF . Harp with five strings.

Rev: CLONMELL \*1656. In centre, WH? (extremely worn).

Henbury was a corn miller with property in Lough St.<sup>27</sup> Since his name appears in the 1666 list, his wife obviously issued tokens in her own name during his lifetime, which is rather unusual for the period. The 1654 and 1661 lists note a William Hanbury, shopkeeper, who is probably the same person.

24. Andrew Robeson

Obv: \*ANDREW ROBESON OF. Three stags (Arms of Robinson family).

Rev: \*CLONMELL HIS: 1D In centre, a woolpack.



Another variety has a five-pointed star instead of the colon on the reverse.

25. Similar but with  $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>D</sup> counter-struck on 1<sup>D</sup> in a shield-shaped stamp.

#### LISMALIN

26. Garret Quigley

Obv: ★GARRET★QVIGLEY★★★. Two headed eagle.

Rev: ★★★★★IN★LISMALIN. GQ. Above 1<sup>D</sup>. Below 1659.

#### MOYNE

27. Thomas Moore

Obv: THOMAS MVRE. Arms, three mullets on a bar.

Rev: MOYNE·MARCHAN. MR conjoined.

#### NENAGH

28. Robert Hutchinson

Obv: .v.ROB HVTHCINSON OF . Horses and rider, to left.

Rev: .v.NENAGH CLEARK. In centre MT. Below, 1659.

Hutchinson also issued a token of similar design, dated 1658.

29. Joseph Lucas

Obv: ★★IOSEPH★LVCAS★OF. Eagle with wings outstretched.

Rev: ★NEAGHRVNE ★ MAR (N and E conjoined). 1★1<sup>D</sup>★ another ★ to left. Below, 1668.

30. Maurice Thomas

Obv: MAVRICE \* THOMAS. St. George and the dragon.

Rev: OF ★ NENAGH ★★★ In centre, ★1<sup>D</sup>★. Below, 1666.

#### ROSCREA

31. John Smith

Obv: ::★:: IOHN SMITH. Lion rampant.

Rev: ★::OF · ROSCREA. In centre I E and, above, S. Annulets in field.

#### THURLES

32. Thomas Fitzgerald

Obv: ★THOMAS ◆◆ FITZGERALD. Castellated gateway.

Rev: ★OF ◆◆ THVLES 1657. 1<sup>D</sup>. Four lozenges in field.

33. Richard Pursell

Obv: RICHARD PVRSELL. Coat of arms, shield bearing three boars heads.

Rev: ★·OF THVRLES·:



## TIPPERARY

34.

Obv: TEPPERARY WILL

Rev: CHANGE THEM AGAN. In centre RC.

W.P. Burke lists this token as a Clonmel issue, but in more recent works it is attributed to Tipperary town.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Patrick J. Corish, "The Cromwellian Regime 1650-60", in Moody, Martin and Byrne, Eds., *A New History of Ireland*, (Oxford, 1976), Vol. III, p. 375.
2. Aidan Clarke, "The Irish Economy, 1600-60", in Moody, Martin and Byrne, Eds., *op. cit.*, p.185.
3. Margaret MacCurtain, *Tudor and Stuart Ireland* (Dublin, 1972), p.158. See also E.A. Dalton, *History of Ireland*, (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 359-60.
4. Aidan Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
5. Rosalind Mitchison, "Ireland and Scotland: The Seventeenth Century Legacies Compared", in Devine and Dickson, Eds., *Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1850*, (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 4.
6. Colm Gallagher, "Seventeenth Century Irish Tokens: A Documentary Perspective", in *British and Irish Tokens Journal*, Vol. I; see also Gerard Rice, "The Seventeenth Century Tokens of Co. Louth" in *County Lough A. and H. Journal*, Vol. xx, No. 4, 1984, p.8.
7. J.H. Andrews, "Land and People, c. 1685", in Moody, Martin and Byrne, *op. cit.* p. 474. See also William Smyth, "Property, patronage and population — reconstructing the human geography of mid-17th century Tipperary" in William Nolan, Ed., *Tipperary: History and Society* (Dublin, 1985), pp. 108, 132-3; Elizabeth Shee and S.J. Watson, *Clonmel, an Architectural Guide* (Dublin, 1975), p. 12.
8. William Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Rev. William P. Burke, *History of Clonmel* (reprinted, Kilkenny, 1983), pp. 103-4, 245-62.
11. George C. Williamson, *Trade Tokens Issued in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1891); R.A.S. Macalister, "A Catalogue of the Irish Traders Tokens in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy" in *P.R.I.A.* Vol. XL, 1931.
12. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
13. Williamson, *op. cit.* p. 1366.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 1367.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
20. *Ibid.*, pp.245,247,259.
21. *Ibid.*, pp.91
22. *Ibid.*, p.103
23. *Ibid.*, pp.246,249,257
24. *Ibid.*, pp.104,246.
25. *Ibid.*, pp.108, 250, 255.
26. *Ibid.*, pp.103,249,255,257,266. See also Nolan, *op. cit.* p.132.
27. *Ibid.*, pp.103,246,249,257.

