

Convict love token from H. Flood., 1844

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Physical description

A convict love token made up of a coin engraved on both sides with stippled text. One side features the text 'H. FLOO / D TRANS / PORTED / FOR 7 Y / EARS'. The other side features a smoothed down head and shoulders, profile view of a man, with the text 'AGED 15 ON MARCH TH7 1844' around the edge.

Statement of significance

The Timothy Millett collection comprises 307 convict love tokens dating from 1762 to 1856, and seven contemporary documents relating to the criminal justice system including: recommendations to commute the death sentences of Hester Sampson and Thomas Hayes to life transportation; a calendar of prisoners awaiting trial in the goals of Durham, Newcastle and Northumberland; a request to the Middlesex assizes for rewards to be paid; a printed copy of George Skene's last speech prior to execution; a printed broadside listing prisoners in Dorchester jail awaiting transportation; and a 60 page handwritten account of the life of Thomas Jones, who was transported twice and finally hanged at Winchester Prison in 1856.

Convict love tokens, typically made from smoothed-down coins and engraved or stippled with a message, derive from traditional sailors' farewells. The production of these 'leaden hearts' rose as criminal indictments increased in Britain, with the majority produced during the 1820s and 1830s. As mementos made by or for convicts facing transportation (or death) to leave behind for their loved ones, the tokens provide a poignant, personal insight into the transportation system.

Object information

 What

Type	Convict love tokens
Collection	Timothy Millett collection
Dimensions	H 1mm x Dia 29mm
Material	Metal - non specific

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